

SUPERMAN ASCENDANCY

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Based on characters appearing in
DC Comics

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S U P E R M A N A S C E N D A N C Y

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE

Stars illuminate the inky blackness. For a few moments nothing happens. Then an OBJECT moves into frame, PAST CAMERA.

We PAN WITH the object as it makes it's way through space, eventually panning around to reveal it's destination - Earth.

As the object moves towards the atmosphere of the planet, it begins to burn bright red. Rocket thrusters on the back light up.

A satellite in orbit of Earth turns slightly, pointing itself at the object. CLOSER IN we can see the logo on the side - a stylised 'L' and the words: LexSat-95.

EXT. MONITORING STATION -- NIGHT

CLOSE on the L-shaped logo - beneath it we see the words:

LexCorp - bringing the future to you today

We PAN UP to reveal a network of gigantic satellite dishes pointed at the heavens, illuminated by a full moon.

SUPER: LexCorp satellite monitoring station, Corto Maltese

INT. MONITORING STATION -- NIGHT

The place is dark and near deserted, the only light coming from the monitors. Two TECHNICIANS are present - one idly playing solitaire, filing-cabinet bottle of Vodka on the go, the other snoozing in his chair.

On a monitor in the background, we see a red blip begin to descend into the atmosphere.

EXT. SPACE

The object begins to glow bright red as it descends into the atmosphere.

INT. MONITORING STATION -- NIGHT

A chime sounds from the boards. Tech #1 idly looks up from his cards, then does a double take.

TECH #1
Ted, take a look at this.

His colleague wakes up slowly.

TECH #2
Whassamatter...?

TECH #1
We got a blip.

EXT. MOJAVE DESERT -- NIGHT

The object flashes down out of the sky and SMASHES into the ground with a very final thump.

INT. MONITORING STATION -- NIGHT

Tech #1 works the computer as his friend moves to his side, rubbing his eyes.

TECH #2
Has it hit?

TECH #1
Checking now...

TECH #2
This better not be another damn meteorite.

TECH #1
(shrugs)
Might make the big man's day...

He brings up a map of North America - a blip appears.

TECH #1 (CONT'D)
Looks like it came down in the Mojave. And check out this heat signature.

A pile of technical data appears on the screen. Tech #2 lets out an impressed whistle.

TECH #2
NASA seen it yet?

TECH #1
Don't think so, but it won't be long.
(beat)
What're we going to do?

A moment - then Tech #2 makes a decision.

TECH #2
Get on the horn to Metropolis - they're going to want to know about this.

As Tech #1 gets to work, Tech #2 gazes at the screen in wonderment.

TECH #2 (CONT'D)
What are you...?

EXT. MOJAVE DESERT -- NIGHT

We CLOSE IN on the crater and we finally get a look at the thing buried at the bottom - it's a PROBE, and it's still in one piece despite the impact.

A beat - nothing happens ... and then the machine whirs to life... And on the side of the probe, an insignia lights up bright red - the familiar red 'S' shield against black!

The probe begins to emit a signal - alien Morse code? We PAN UP and AWAY from the probe, up until the stars of the night sky fill the sky completely...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. METROPOLIS -- MORNING

We start up in the clouds before PANNING DOWN to give us our first view of the great city, illuminated by the morning sunlight which sparkles off the waters of the bay.

Two landmarks define the skyline - the DAILY PLANET (globe rotating majestically on the top) and the LEXCORP TOWER (the 'L'-shaped building that dominates the entire city).

EXT. METROPOLIS STREETS -- DAY

CLARK KENT, attired for work in suit and glasses, makes his way through the streets, heading to work. All around him is the hustle and bustle of the big city.

EXT. NEWS-STAND -- DAY

Clark picks up a copy of the Daily Planet. He grins at the vendor.

CLARK
Morning Mr Graham.

VENDOR
Mister Kent, right on time.

As Clark pays for his paper, the vendor points up at something across the street.

VENDOR (CONT'D)
Check out the new eyesore.

Clark looks ... a billboard poster has appeared across the street, a poster showing a very familiar face and adorned with the words.

"Lex Luthor for President, 2004.

Bringing you the future today"

Clark shakes his head in amazement mixed with disgust.

CUT TO:

INT. DIAMOND STORE -- DAY

Hands in black gloves grab diamonds from boxes.

A robbery is in progress - armed thugs (most with guns, one holding an iron bar) in balaclava masks hold staff and customers on the ground at gunpoint while the others clean out the store.

Their leader, BAUER, is getting twitchy.

BAUER

Hurry up!

THUG #1

That's it!

BAUER

Okay, lets get out of here!

THUG #2

(to crowd)

NOBODY MOVE!

The thugs charge out of the shop--

EXT. DIAMOND STORE -- DAY

The thugs emerge onto the streets--

BAUER

Ah, shit!

Cop cars are converging from one end of the street. Bauer looks around, spots something.

BAUER (CONT'D)

Come on!

He leads the thugs to where a bus is about to pull off. They all charge inside.

INT. BUS -- DAY

The thugs board the bus - immediate chaos ensues.

BAUER

Okay everyone - everyone be cool
and no-one gets hurt!

(to thug)

Get on with it!

Thug #1 grabs the driver, hauls him out of the seat.

THUG #1

Got it.

BAUER

Alright, get us out of here!

The thug hits the gas.

EXT. DIAMOND STORE -- DAY

The bus PEELS OFF into the city.

EXT. NEWS-STAND -- DAY

Clark is still having his ear bent by the Vendor.

VENDOR

...I still can't believe it - we've got Lex Luthor on trial for corporate sabotage, potentially the biggest industrial trial of the century...

Clark tries to get a word in edgeways - it doesn't happen.

VENDOR (CONT'D)

And then not only does he get off on a technicality, not only is he completely exonerated by the Senate Select Committee, but then he promptly throws his name up for President of the United States.

(Shakes his head)

That guy's got some nerve. I mean Nixon, now that guy had stones, but this guy...

Clark's pretty much letting this conversation go in one ear and out the other ... but at this moment we HEAR what he hears ... GUNSHOTS, PEELING TYRES, POLICE SIRENS.

Clark snaps out of it to find the Vendor still in mid-flow.

VENDOR (CONT'D)

...kinda like Trump but with none of his style...

CLARK

I'm sorry, Mr Graham, but I really have to go...

He turns and practically runs onto the street. The Vendor shakes his head.

VENDOR

Always a god-damned emergency.

EXT. ALLEY -- DAY

Clark charges down a nearby alley, ripping off his glasses as he goes - his blue eyes shine brightly in the dimness.

He grasps the seams of his shirt and RIPS IT OPEN TO REVEAL THE RED 'S' SHIELD UNDERNEATH!

EXT. NEWS-STAND -- DAY

The Vendor is fiddling with a transistor radio when--

BANG! The roar of a sonic boom echoes through the street - everyone looks up in time to see a blue and red flash climbing into the air.

Some people start cheering. The Vendor shrugs and goes back to his radio.

EXT. METROPOLIS STREETS -- DAY

The bus careers around a corner, rising up onto two wheels for just a second ... the blaring of horns follows it.

INT. BUS -- DAY

Everyone's screaming and hanging on for dear life.

BAUER
(yelling)
SHUT UP!
(to driver)
How far now?

THUG #1
Almost at the freeway, boss.

EXT. STREETS -- DAY

Two kids try to cross the road - they look up in time to see the bus hurtling towards them--

The kids SCREAM--

A blue flash sweeps past them, YANKING them out of harms way just as the bus shoots past.

The kids find themselves standing on the pavement on the other side of the road.

KID #1
What was that?

KID #2
(awestruck)
That was HIM...

EXT. METROPOLIS FREEWAY -- DAY

The bus has made it to the freeway.

INT. BUS -- DAY

The thugs all cheer in triumph - Bauer sags against his seat.

BAUER
Alright ... good job boys, they
can't get us here--

BANG! Something smashes down HARD onto the roof of the bus.

THUG #2
What the hell was that!

Everyone LURCHES as the bus is PULLED TO THE SIDE OF THE ROAD--

And comes to a hard stop.

BAUER
Shit.

Everyone looks through the front windshield to see--

SUPERMAN.

PASSENGER
Awesome...

EXT. METROPOLIS FREEWAY -- DAY

Superman walks forward, grabs the front of the bus and rips the entire front windshield clear off!

SUPERMAN
Gentlemen, I believe this is your stop.

BAUER
Get him!

The thugs open fire - bullets bounce harmlessly off his chest--

Superman's irises turn red - the thugs drop their guns as the metal SUPERHEATS in their hands--!

The thug with the iron bar ROARS and leaps out of the bus to attack Superman. He hefts the bar--

Which has no effect on Superman whatsoever - the vibrations cause the thug to howl in pain and hit the deck.

BAUER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Superman!

Superman turns to look - Bauer and the other thugs have got off the bus. All the thugs are hiding behind Bauer, who is holding a Passenger at gunpoint.

BAUER (CONT'D)
Here's how it's going to work - you're going to let us go our separate ways, or else the pretty lady is going over the edge!

A tense moment - the hostage looks pleadingly into Superman's eyes.

SUPERMAN
Sorry, but I can't do that.

BAUER

Shame.

And with no warning he HURLS THE WOMAN OVER THE EDGE--!

EXT. ABOVE FREEWAYS -- DAY

The woman SCREAMS as she plummets towards the traffic below--

And stops dead to find Superman holding her tightly about twenty feet over the traffic.

SUPERMAN

Don't worry, I got you.

HOSTAGE

Don't let go!

SUPERMAN

(grins)

I won't.

He heads back up towards the bus.

EXT. METROPOLIS FREEWAY -- DAY

Bauer and the thugs are trying to run for it - they stop dead as Superman descends to the ground in front of them, and he doesn't look happy.

SUPERMAN

Uh-uh, you don't get off that easily.

EXT. SAME -- MOMENTS LATER

Police cars screech to a halt at the side of the road - CAPTAIN MAGGIE SAWYER and her team leap out to find Superman standing over the thugs, who are bound up by thug #2's iron bar. She gives Superman an admiring look.

SAWYER

You're going to leave us out of a job, Superman.

SUPERMAN

Just doing my part.

SAWYER

We'll take it from here.

SUPERMAN

Good. Now if you'll excuse me...

He takes flight, heading straight up towards the clouds. Sawyer looks from his retreating figure down to Bauer and the thugs.

SAWYER

And let that be a lesson to you!

CUT TO:

EXT. LEXCORP PLAZA ONE -- DAY

We PAN DOWN the side of the huge LexCorp Tower to reveal the plaza, which has been set up for a press conference. 'Luthor for President' banners are visible everywhere.

A podium has been erected and a crowd of journalists are waiting. Among them we see LOIS LANE and JIMMY OLSEN. Lois checks her watch in irritation.

LOIS

Typical...

JIMMY

Well, that's what happens when you're running to be president - you become very important, therefore you end up being allowed to be fashionably late to everything.

Lois gives Jimmy a look.

LOIS

Jimmy, Lex has never been on time for anything in his life - I should know, I was the one who had a relationship with him for the better part of the year.

JIMMY

Ah. Right. Gotcha.

LOIS

In any case, I meant Clark. There's another one who's never on time for anything.

JIMMY

Oh.

A moment passes - Lois checks her watch again.

LOIS

That's a point - where the hell is Lex, anyway?

EXT. LEXCORP TOWER -- DAY

We pan up the side of the building, eventually reaching the office on the top floor.

LUTHOR (prelap)

This is unacceptable.

INT. LUTHOR'S OFFICE -- DAY

LEX LUTHOR - as bald and imposing as ever - has his back to us as he looks out across the great city of Metropolis.

LUTHOR

I want something understood, and understood you will - this is my city. Metropolis is the world wonder she is today because I made her so. I sweated blood into this city. That is the kind of dedication and commitment one needs to get by in this life.

He turns, irate as hell. Stood behind him is a nervous-as-hell young man in an over-smart suit - WINTERS - visibly sweating.

LUTHOR (CONT'D)

One thing I will not stand is incompetence, Mr Winters. Another thing I will not stand is laziness. You have both.

WINTERS

Mr Luthor, I--

LUTHOR

Did I say speak?

Winters gets the hint and shuts up. Luthor comes around his desk and begins pacing around, looking for something to kill.

LUTHOR (CONT'D)

Your incompetence very nearly lost me ten points in the polls, Mr Winters. Your one saving grace is the fact that you realised your mistake in time for us to do something about it. Right now, what could have been a disaster is simply a bad memory...

He stops in front of Winters and looks him dead in the eye.

LUTHOR (CONT'D)

But things could have gone so very differently, couldn't they, Mr Winters?

WINTERS

Yes sir.

LUTHOR

I'm glad you see the error of your ways.

He hits the intercom button and MERCY enters the office.

LUTHOR (CONT'D)

Mercy, show Mr Winters the way out, please.

MERCY

Yes, Mr Luthor.

Winters practically runs from the office. As Luthor sits down his campaign manager, HARLIN (40s, black, not to be trifled with) enters.

HARLIN

Another ex-publicist?

LUTHOR

Another soon-to-be-ex publicist. His little blunder nearly cost us the whole election. Things are already to close for comfort.

HARLIN

Then I've got some good news for you, sir.

Luthor looks up in surprise as Harlin slides a file across the desk towards him.

EXT. LEXCORP PLAZA ONE -- DAY

Everyone in the crowd is getting irritable now.

LOIS

Fashionably late is one thing, but this is pushing it a bit...

But at that moment a cute female ANNOUNCER takes to the stage, taps the microphone.

ANNOUNCER

Ladies and gentlemen--

LOIS

(aside to Jimmy)
Here we go.

ANNOUNCER

It is my great pleasure to present to you the founder and CEO of LexCorp, and the next President of the United States - Lex Luthor!

And Luthor takes the stage amongst flashes of cameras.

LUTHOR

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you all for coming...

INT. LEXCORP TOWER - CORRIDORS -- DAY

Luthor, with Harlin and Mercy in tow, walk back into the tower. Behind them in the background we can see the press conference clearing up.

LUTHOR

We should have postponed that--

HARLIN

We can't afford to postpone anything right now - momentum is everything in this election.

LUTHOR

It's done now. Mercy, get the chopper ready. I want to head out there right now.

MERCY

Yes, Mr Luthor.

As she heads off, Luthor turns back to Harlin.

LUTHOR

What about the other matter?

Harlin offers a tight grin.

HARLIN

There are some interesting noises coming out of Kansas...

EXT. THE DAILY PLANET -- DAY

Just to establish.

INT. DAILY PLANET - CITY ROOM -- DAY

Clark is sat working at his desk. He looks up as the doors open and Lois and Jimmy enter.

LOIS

--Who he thinks he's kidding I really have no idea - Clark!

Clark looks up.

CLARK

Something wrong?

LOIS

Oh you bet there's something wrong--

She stalks up to his desk, looking very annoyed.

LOIS (CONT'D)

Where the hell were you this afternoon, you missed the whole press conference!

CLARK

Well, I--

PERRY (O.S.)

He was out getting me a front page!

A hand slaps Clark on the shoulder quite hard as PERRY WHITE, a big grin plastered all over his face, enters frame.

PERRY (CONT'D)

(beaming)

Look at that - this evening's
edition.

He holds up a copy of the Planet - the headline reads:

"Faster than a speeding bullet!"

The picture shows Superman at the freeway situation. Lois
grabs the paper and skims through it.

LOIS

You got this?

CLARK

(shrugs)

I was in the area.

LOIS

How--?

PERRY

Because he's a damn good reporter,
that's why!

He claps Clark hard on the shoulder again - Clark winces
slightly.

PERRY (CONT'D)

It's the job of a journalist to be
on hand when a story breaks - where
the hell were you, Lois?

LOIS

I was covering the Luthor press
conference, like you told me to...

PERRY

(dismisses with a
wave of the hand)

Details.

(to Clark)

Great work Kent - keep it up!

He walks off looking happy. Lois sits down at her desk,
shoots Clark a look that suggests she doesn't believe it
for a minute.

CLARK

What?

LOIS

If you were coming to the press
conference straight from your place,
how did you manage to just happen
to 'be in the area' on the freeway,
they're in opposite directions.

CLARK

(shrugs)

Just lucky I guess.

LOIS

In this business there's no such thing as luck, Clark - just skill.

CLARK

(grins)

Then in that case, if I were you I'd watch out - sounds like I might be about to take your title as the top reporter here.

Lois gives him a look.

LOIS

In your dreams, maybe.

(long beat)

Anyway, about tonight--

CLARK

(on guard)

What about tonight?

LOIS

Journalism awards, big party and awards ceremony tonight - stop me when I'm close.

CLARK

Okay...

There's a moment ... then Lois goes for it.

LOIS

Would you go with me?

Clark looks surprised ... then happy.

CLARK

Sure, of course I will.

(beat)

What about the airforce guy--

LOIS

That ... didn't work out.

CLARK

It never does with you, does it Lois?

She gives him a look. He holds up his hands.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Okay, I'm backing off now.

But secretly he looks very pleased with this turn of events.

CUT TO:

EXT. CADMUS LABS -- DAY

An establishing shot.

TENG (prelap)
LexSat-95 detected the crash in
the early hours of this morning...

INT. CADMUS LABS -- DAY

DR TENG leads Luthor into the main lab.

TENG
At first they thought it was a
meteorite, but then we sent a
team to pick it up and got a whole
lot more than we bargained for.
(beat)
Here we are...

The probe is lying on a table in the centre of the lab.
Luthor stares at the thing in awe. He walks forward,
running his hands over it.

LUTHOR
Analysis?

TENG
We haven't really got started yet
... but the alloys don't match
anything on the periodic table.
(beat)
Can I assume this has sparked your
interest?

Luthor's eye is drawn to something on the side - the 'S'
shield.

LUTHOR
That would be a safe assumption,
Dr Teng ... a very safe assumption
indeed...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. METROPOLIS HILTON -- NIGHT

An establishing shot of the Hilton Hotel, bearing a sign
denoting the Journalism awards.

COMPERE (prelap)
And finally...

INT. METROPOLIS HILTON - AWARDS PRESENTATION -- NIGHT

The audience is packed out. Clark, Lois and Perry are sat
near the front. Clark and Perry are both black tie; Lois
wears a black dress and looks stunning ... but right now
she looks terrified.

The COMPERE on the stage continues...

COMPERE
...the award for best story goes
to...

He opens the envelope, smiles and reads:

COMPERE (CONT'D)
 'The Usual Suspects,' by Lois Lane
 of the Daily Planet.

Rapturous applause. Lois is overjoyed - she hugs Perry and then Clark as she makes her way up onto the stage to collect the award. The audience gives her a standing ovation.

LOIS
 Wow. Oh my god, wow, it's ... I'd like to thank the judges for having the good sense to award this to me--
 (laughter)
 I'd like to thank my editor, Perry White, for believing in me enough to hire me - stand up and take a bow, Perry!

Perry laughs - but he gets to his feet and takes a bow, and gets applause for it.

LOIS (CONT'D)
 But most of all I'd like to thank my partner, Clark Kent - he was the one who told me I was approaching this article from the wrong way, who made me start from scratch, and was responsible for making me write the best I can. Clark ... I couldn't have done it without you.

More applause and another standing ovation - Clark's huge smile matches Lois's.

INT. METROPOLIS HILTON - BAR -- NIGHT

The after-show party is in full-swing. We pan through the guests to find Lois clutching her award and talking to Perry.

PERRY
 ...fine work, Lois, fine work - enjoy this tonight, you deserve it.

LOIS
 (smiles)
 Thanks chief.
 (beat)
 Sorry.

PERRY
 (grins)
 You can get away with it, this one time.
 (spotting someone
 OS)
 Bob!

He walks off to chat to someone. Clark returns carrying drinks.

CLARK
Congratulations.

LOIS
Thanks.

They clink glasses and drink.

CLARK
And thank you for what you said in the speech.

LOIS
(shrugs)
Only saying what I felt.

CLARK
You're over-crediting my contribution--

LOIS
No, Clark, I'm not.

She looks him in the eye.

LOIS (CONT'D)
If it hadn't been for you ... I wouldn't have had a chance of getting the article done...
(indicates award)
Or getting one of these, so...

She reaches up and kisses him on the cheek - Clark looks startled.

LOIS (CONT'D)
Thank you.

Clark struggles to regain his composure.

CLARK
You ... you're welcome.

CUT TO:

NEWS REPORT

Lex Luthor facing the camera, giving an animated speech.
We come in midway through...

LUTHOR
...because we are a great nation,
and we have the capacity to be the
driving force behind the entire
world IF our leaders have the vision
to live up that birthright...

We PULL BACK from his image and we are...

INT. CANTEEN -- NIGHT

The TV is mounted on a wall in a canteen. A group of Scottish Sailors watch, half interested.

SAILOR #1
 (shakes head)
 What does this bastard think he's
 playing at?

EXT. OIL RIG -- NIGHT

We are in the middle of the ocean, rain is lashing down and the rig is being buffeted by a heavy storm.

SUPER: North Sea, off the coast of Scotland

INT. CANTEEN -- NIGHT

As before. The TV continues to play in the background.

BBC NEWSREADER (O.S.)
 Lex Luthor is slowly widening his
 lead on his opponent...

SAILOR #2
 Turn this crap off. This is all
 we bloody well--

Before he can finish that statement, an EXPLOSION rips through the room.

EXT. OIL RIG -- NIGHT

The whole place has gone up in flames!

The camera turns a sharp 180 degrees before rushing forward, across oceans and continents until we--

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. METROPOLIS HILTON - BAR -- NIGHT

PUSH IN on Clark ... as a look of horror crosses his face.

CLARK
 No...

He turns and heads for the door - off-screen Lois grabs his arm and pulls him back.

LOIS
 Clark, what is it?

CLARK
 I have to go.

LOIS
 Go? Go, where? Clark...

But he's already sprinting for the door.

CLARK
 (calling back)
 I'll explain later.

Lois watches him vanish with deep confusion. She looks up to see Perry join her.

PERRY
 Where's the fire?

LOIS
 Your guess is as good as mine.

EXT. METROPOLIS -- NIGHT

Superman rises up out of the city - he hovers for just a second to get his bearings--

And then he's gone in a blue flash and the roar of a sonic boom.

EXT. OIL RIG -- NIGHT

The place is a scene of complete devastation. Flames cover the whole rig.

A group of sailors are stuck on the platform - they look down to see the survivors evacuating onto the boat.

SAILOR #1
 Hey! Hang on!

SAILOR #2
 Stop! What about us? What about--

BANG! Another explosion rips across the rig - the sailors are thrown backwards--

The platform gives out - they all scream as they drop--

And suddenly stop dead - to find Superman holding all four of them above the water.

SAILOR #1
 Sweet mother of Jesus!

SUPERMAN
 Hang on!

He flies them down to the deck of the boat, sets them down gently.

EXT. DECK OF THE BOAT -- NIGHT

Everyone looks up in surprise to see Superman in their midst.

SUPERMAN
 Is everyone alright?

SAILOR CAPTAIN
 Everyone who's alive is out ...
 everyone else...

Another explosion rips across the rig - everyone except Superman drops to the deck.

SUPERMAN
 Hold on to something!

He leaps over the side.

SAILOR CAPTAIN
 What the--!

And at that moment the boat suddenly shoots forward at great speed--

Superman is pushing the thing forward--

The boat eventually comes to a stop - the sailors look to see the rig only barely visible in the distance, a flaming speck.

Superman's head appears over the side.

SUPERMAN
 You should be safe here.

SAILOR CAPTAIN
 Where are you--!

WHOOSH! And he's gone again.

EXT. OIL RIG -- NIGHT

Superman shoots towards the rig ... then around it. He circles the rig at top speed, creating a cyclone effect--

And a moment later the fire CUTS DEAD!

EXT. DECK OF THE BOAT -- NIGHT

The sailors watch in amazement. The captain shakes his head.

SAILOR CAPTAIN
 Unbelievable...

Above them they see Superman flying off - they all cheer and wave.

Superman throws a salute before vanishing into the night.

CUT TO:

EXT. METROPOLIS -- NIGHT

Superman flies through the city.

EXT. OUTSIDE APARTMENT BUILDING -- NIGHT

Superman comes to rest on the roof opposite an apartment building.

X-RAY

Inside the apartment we see Lois sat in front of the TV, the award in her hand, looking dejected.

BACK TO SCENE

On Superman ... and he looks as though he feels terrible. He turns and flies off into the night.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. METROPOLIS -- MORNING

As the sun rises over the great city.

INT. CLARK'S APARTMENT -- MORNING

Clark is getting ready for work, just in the process of tying his tie. After a second the phone rings and he answers.

CLARK

Hello?

LANA (O.S.)

Clark.

Clark is surprised.

CLARK

Lana?

INT. LANA'S HOUSE -- MORNING

LANA LANG, her face strangely cold, is watching a TV screen just out of frame. We can't see what's on it, but she's watching intently.

LANA

Turn on WGBS, now. You aren't going to like it.

INT. CLARK'S APARTMENT -- MORNING

Clark grabs his TV remote, switches the channel on.

ANCHOR (O.S.)

...and now back to Cat Grant in Smallville for the latest on the Luthor election campaign. Cat.

Clark's eyes go wide:

ON TV SCREEN

CAT GRANT (keep an eye on her, we'll be seeing more of her later) speaks into the camera. From the background we can tell she's in a perky small-town coffee shop.

CAT

Ted, I'm here at Metcalf's diner in Smallville, Kansas where presidential hopeful Lex Luthor has thrown an impromptu press conference.

The screen shows Luthor, in shirt-sleeves and public relations mode, a genial smile on his face.

LUTHOR

That's right Cat. Now, ever since I began this endeavour six months ago, I knew it was going to be a difficult road to travel. But finally I have someone beside me in this fight and I am proud to introduce my running mate--

BACK TO SCENE

Clark suddenly looks very apprehensive, the penny dropping.

ON TV SCREEN

Luthor, like a magician...

LUTHOR (CONT'D)

The Senator from Kansas State, Mr Peter Ross!

On the TV we pull back to reveal the man sat next to Luthor - PETE ROSS, a man in his late twenties with an honest face and a salt-of-the-earth charm around him. He smiles for the cameras.

PETE

Thank you, Mister Luth--
(catches himself)
Lex.

He grins and shakes his head.

PETE (CONT'D)

Damn, that's going to take some getting used to.

CAT

Senator Ross...

PETE

Pete. It's just Pete.

LUTHOR

"It's just Pete."
(MORE)

LUTHOR (CONT'D)

I love that about this man! He
can say it and it just comes out
naturally!

A laugh goes up from the crowd.

ON CLARK

His face has fallen in an expression of utter disbelief.

LANA

(on phone)

Clark? Are you seeing this?

CLARK

Yeah. Yeah I am.

INT. LANA'S HOUSE -- DAY

Lana watches the TV screen coldly.

LANA

I think maybe someone ought to try
and talk some sense into him.
What do you think Clark?

INT. CLARK'S APARTMENT -- DAY

Clark's face is set.

CLARK

I'll be right over.

He hangs the phone up and walks out of frame - seconds
later we hear a WHOOSH and the familiar roar of a sonic
boom.

EXT. SMALLVILLE -- DAY

An establishing shot of the small town.

INT. METCALF'S DINER, SMALLVILLE -- DAY

The press conference is in full swing. Pete is speaking
for the cameras, Luthor hovering nearby, a confident smile
on his face.

PETE

I have to admit that when I was
asked I was initially reluctant,
but it soon became clear that we
both want the same thing - to steer
our country back onto the right
path, to once again become a world
leader.

Clark enters at the back of the diner and begins pushing
his way towards the front of the crowd.

PETE (CONT'D)

I guess you could say that Lex and I represent both ends of the spectrum, both sides of our nation - the country mouse ... and the city mouse.

There is an appreciative laugh from the crowd. Clark has made his way to the front as Cat turns to Luthor.

CAT

Mr Luthor, your choice of Senator Ross has raised a few eyebrows already, particularly since the Senator has been so outspoken about the continued presence of a LexCorp plant right here in Smallville. Why did you choose Mr Ross to stand with you?

LUTHOR

Well, I don't think it would have been healthy if I'd chosen a running mate who just blindly agreed with me on everything - it would have been just like a repeat of my first marriage.

There is a laugh from the crowd. Pete coughs into his hand to hide a laugh as Luthor gets back down to business.

LUTHOR (CONT'D)

Seriously ... because Senator Ross has always been unflinchingly honest about his opinion on everything. This is a rare thing, especially in this day and age. I'll need someone as my second in command who can tell me when I'm going wrong, to offer the voice of reason on everything.

He glances around the crowd and suddenly notices Clark in the front row. His eyes go wide and his face breaks into a smile.

LUTHOR (CONT'D)

I don't believe it - now this IS a reunion! Come on up here, Clark!

Everyone turns to look at Clark, who suddenly looks embarrassed. Luthor turns back to Cat.

LUTHOR (CONT'D)

I'm sure you know Clark Kent of the Daily Planet, right Cat?

CAT

(darkly)

Yes, we used to work together...

LUTHOR

(smoothly)

Of course you did. He and Senator Ross used to go to High School right here in Smallville - best friends, isn't that right Pete?

PETE

Right. Come on up, Clark!

With some reluctance Clark comes up to join Luthor and Pete, shaking hands with both of them before Luthor poses them for a photo, himself in the middle.

LUTHOR

Best friends for all these years - in Metropolis such small-town values may seem outdated, but this is the heart of America and the heart of the nation I hope to serve one day.

A photographer's camera FLASHES, capturing the moment forever.

FREEZE FRAME.

INT. SAME -- LATER

The conference is clearing up. Luthor is stood off to one side talking to Cat, who doesn't look too happy.

CAT

I thought we had an agreement that WGBS - that I had an exclusive on this...

LUTHOR

(soothing)

You do, don't worry about it - Mr Kent was just here to see his old friend, nothing for you to worry about...

The conversation drops off as we cross to the other side of the diner where Clark and Pete are deep in conversation.

CLARK

I have to say this one came out of nowhere.

PETE

I know - crazy, hey?

CLARK

Yeah. Look...

PETE

I know, I know you're still upset about what happened to Lana, and I can't really blame you for that...

(MORE)

PETE (CONT'D)

(beat)
 ...but Clark, that was years ago
 and Lex was hardly involved in
 that.

Clark clearly doesn't believe a word of it but he moves on.

CLARK

And look at you - potential vice president.

Clark grins. Pete grins too, but it's slightly muted.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Pete?

PETE

Remember this thing?

He points to the end of the counter, where an ebony carving of an elephant's head is positioned.

PETE (CONT'D)

We used to come in here when we were kids.

CLARK

I remember, but--

PETE

We'd buy a soda, and then Old Man Metcalf would let us rub the elephant's head and make a wish. You never bothered, but I always did. Then, over the years, when the wishes never came true, I stopped. I guess you could say I stopped believing, stopped waiting for something to happen because I knew it never would.

He gives Clark a hard look.

PETE (CONT'D)

I'm fed up of being on the losing side, Clark. With Lex I've finally got a chance to do some good.

(beat)

I know you don't like him ... but can you at least be happy for me?

There's a long moment - then Clark smiles and shakes Pete's hand.

CLARK

Congratulations, Pete - good luck.

PETE

Thank you Clark - it means a lot coming from you.

(beat)

Look, I know I haven't been straight with you about things, so how's about a chance for me to make it up to you? How does two free passes for the reception in Metropolis sound? As my guests, not as members of the press. How about that?

Clark happens to glance across the diner and catch Luthor's eye - a dark look passes between them.

PETE (CONT'D)

Clark?

Clark snaps back to reality.

CLARK

Sure, that'd be great.

EXT. METCALF'S DINER, SMALLVILLE -- DAY

Clark exits the diner and lets out a long sigh of frustration.

CLARK

Oh boy...

LANA (O.S.)

Don't you just want to scream at times like these?

Clark turns in surprise to see Lana stood with her back against the wall watching him.

CLARK

Lana, hey.

LANA

Saw you inside - didn't want to interrupt.

(frustrated)

I can't believe Pete's siding with Lex Luthor ... what's he doing this for, Clark?

Clark folds her into a long hug.

CLARK

I don't know ... I honestly don't know...

LANA

You know anywhere we can get breakfast? I really don't want to have to go back into Metcalf's.

Clark grins.

CLARK

I think I know just the place.

EXT. KENT FARM -- DAY

An establishing shot of the Kent Farm, surrounded by endless fields of wheat.

JONATHAN (prelap)

Now this is a kick in the pants
and no mistake...

INT. KENT FARM -- DAY

JONATHAN KENT shovels liberal amounts of sugar into his coffee mug, looking irritated. He, Clark and Lana are sat at the table, breakfast laid out before them.

Clark eyes the sugar with a pained look.

CLARK

Uh, dad...

JONATHAN

(taking no notice)

All these years I thought Pete had
more sense than that...

He dumps a final spoonful into his coffee, takes a swig and nearly chokes. He forces himself to swallow - Lana struggles to hide a laugh.

MARTHA (O.S.)

Don't do that, Jonathan, you'll
give yourself an ulcer.

MARTHA KENT comes INTO FRAME carrying a huge stack of pancakes on a plate. She sets it down in the middle of the table before sitting down to join them.

CLARK

This is great, Mom - you really
outdid yourself.

MARTHA

Like I'm going to miss the chance
to feed my only son.

They all get down to eating the breakfast.

LANA

When do you have to get back, Clark?

CLARK

Pretty soon - if I take any longer
people'll start wondering where I
am...

JONATHAN

And the last thing we need is people
asking awkward questions, especially
at a time like this.

CLARK

Got that right.

A moment of frustrated silence.

CLARK (CONT'D)

I still can't believe Pete's going through with this.

JONATHAN

He always had ambition, that boy.

MARTHA

Ambition, yes, but honesty and integrity too. That's why I was so thrilled he went into politics - he's just the sort of person this country needs. But to ally himself with Lex Luthor...

Lana speaks up very quietly.

LANA

Lex Luthor can be very persuasive when he wants to be.

CLARK

And he can offer Pete a chance to win.

(beat)

I don't know if I'm happy about this or not. I mean, with Pete's help, Luthor has a very good chance of winning--

JONATHAN

Putting Lex Luthor in the White House.

CLARK

Which is a bad thing, but ... it also puts Pete in there as well, who is a good man. Maybe he can act as a moderating influence.

MARTHA

A Trojan horse?

CLARK

(shrugs)

Maybe.

LANA

I don't think so.

They all look at her.

LANA (CONT'D)

Pete might be using Luthor to get himself into a position of power - but I don't think there's any doubt
(MORE)

LANA (CONT'D)
 that Luthor is using Pete. And
 that's never a good thing.

This is a sobering thought all around.

EXT. LEXCORP TOWER -- DAY

Three LexCorp helicopters land on the roof.

INT. LEXCORP TOWER - CORRIDORS -- DAY

Luthor, Harlin and a group of corporate lackeys make their way down the corridor at a brisk clip.

LUTHOR
 So what's on the schedule for
 tonight?

HARLIN
 You got a dinner with Mayor Reynolds
 and Governor Donner at eight, then
 an appearance at Metropolis U, for
 which you'll have to make a speech...

LUTHOR
 Another one?

HARLIN
 Student vote, very important.

They round a corner and enter--

INT. LUTHOR'S OFFICE -- DAY

They enter and suddenly stop dead as Luthor catches sight of something off-screen.

LUTHOR
 (grim, to Harlin)
 You're not wrong.

Luthor's chair has it's back to us. A pair of feet in high heels can be seen propped on the window ledge.

LUTHOR (CONT'D)
 Gentlemen, if you'll excuse us?

Harlin and the lackeys file out as Luthor shrugs his coat off.

LUTHOR (CONT'D)
 Now this is a surprise.

ALEXIS (O.S.)
 Daddy, please...

The chair turns and we see the young woman within - ALEXIS LUTHOR (22).

ALEXIS (CONT'D)

Don't tell me I've managed to surprise you for once?

Alexis is Luthor's daughter - blonde and very beautiful, dressed in a sharp yet sexy suit, she has a seductive charm about her and all her father's skills in getting around people.

Luthor rolls his eyes.

LUTHOR

Hardly. The letter I got from the Oxford Dons after they'd kicked you out was fairly...

ALEXIS

Rude? Unflattering?

LUTHOR

Accurate.

He makes his way across to the bar and mixes himself a drink.

LUTHOR (CONT'D)

As for a surprise ... no, not really. Not after you managed to get yourself kicked out of Harvard, Yale, Notre Dame ... remind me again what did it for Oxford?

ALEXIS

The captain of the rowing team in that boat on Thames.

LUTHOR

Right...

He downs his drink.

LUTHOR (CONT'D)

When are you going to get your life on track, Alexis? God knows I've thrown enough money at trying to get you an education.

ALEXIS

Higher education has kind of lost it's appeal these days.

LUTHOR

Ah.

(beat)

Well come on, out with it - we both know damn well this isn't a social call.

ALEXIS

You're all heart.

She swings her feet off the desk and stands up, walking over to him.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)

I've got a proposition for you.

Luthor gives her an inquiring look, then mixes another drink.

LUTHOR

This should be good.

ALEXIS

In a few month's time, you're going to be President of the United States.

LUTHOR

The race isn't over yet.

ALEXIS

(rolls her eyes)

Oh please. Like you're not going to win.

LUTHOR

(ignoring her)

Your proposal?

ALEXIS

Whilst you're running the country you'll be far too busy to rule this little empire of yours. You're going to need someone in charge of LexCorp that you can trust, someone to maintain it while you're sitting in your little white house in Washington.

LUTHOR

Someone like you, you mean?

ALEXIS

Well, who else would you give it to? Your board of directors?

Luthor gives her an 'oh please' look.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)

I thought not. This is a family business, it should be kept in the family. And it'll be right here waiting for you when your two terms are up.

She moves right up close to him.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)

How about it then, daddy? You and me - I think we'd make quite a team.

Luthor smiles slightly. He considers for a long moment before mixing another drink for Alexis.

LUTHOR
Maybe we would at that.

He hands her the drink.

LUTHOR (CONT'D)
Chin chin.

They clink glasses - an alliance has been forged.

CUT TO:

INT. CADMUS LABS -- DAY

The probe sits alone in the silent lab. A moment ... and then the probe comes alive, the symbols lighting up again.

And again we hear that strange signal...

EXT. SPACE

We pan through the stars, the signal now very loud ... until we spot something moving in the distance.

A ship.

As we get closer, we see something very interesting on the nose cone of the ship - a huge version of the familiar 'S' shield.

INT. KRYPTONIAN SHIP - BRIDGE

The signal is very loud, emerging from alien controls that seem to be made entirely of crystals.

A hand reaches into frame, picks up one of the crystals - we pull back to reveal Her-al (40s) a man with a battle-hardened look about him, dressed in a black uniform complete with the 'S' shield across the chest.

He stares at the crystal in wonderment.

HER-AL
Finally...

He gets up and practically runs off the bridge.

INT. KRYPTONIAN SHIP - CABIN

CLOSE on hands grinding a curved sword against a lump of rock. A man sits in the shadows - the red 'S' shield across his chest clearly visible.

The door opens - Her-al enters, bows low out of respect.

HER-AL
My Lord...

The man in the shadows looks up, and for the first time we see him...

A strikingly handsome man in his early thirties, strongly muscled, a warrior, but with an unmistakably cruel streak about him ... TY-ZOR.

TY-ZOR
What is it, Her-al?

HER-AL
We have just received a signal
from one of the probes.

TY-ZOR
And?

Her-al hands him the crystal.

HER-AL
A positive result, My Lord.

Ty-Zor takes the crystal from Her-al and holds it ... amazed.

TY-ZOR
After all these years ... the son
of Jor-El, finally within our grasp.

He stands up sharply.

TY-ZOR (CONT'D)
Set a course, Her-al. And tell
everyone to be ready. This is it.

HER-AL
Yes My Lord.

He bows and quickly exits. Ty-Zor pushes his sword back into the scabbard.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE DAILY PLANET -- DAY

Just to establish.

INT. DAILY PLANET - CITY ROOM -- DAY

Clark is sat at his desk, sat in thought.

A paper lands on his desk, jarring him out of his thoughts.

PERRY (O.S.)
Congratulations - you made the
front page.

Perry is stood beside him, looking annoyed. Clark picks up the paper and visibly winces - the picture on the front page shows himself, Pete and Luthor at the diner press conference.

PERRY (CONT'D)

Nice going, Kent - Ross is supposed to be your best friend, how come he didn't give you a heads up?

CLARK

(snappy)

I don't know.

Perry can see he's touched a nerve - he walks off.

Clark stares at the picture in disgust for a few long moments before he becomes aware of someone walking over to him - Lois.

LOIS

How did you do that, Kent?

CLARK

Do what?

LOIS

Yesterday you were in Metropolis.
Last night you were in Metropolis.
This morning you're in Smallville
and this afternoon you're right
back here as if nothing's happened.

(beat)

Where the hell did you run off to
last night?

And Clark is caught off guard for just a second.

INT. DAILY PLANET - PERRY'S OFFICE -- DAY

Perry is sat behind his desk talking on the telephone. A copy of the Planet is sat in front of him on the desk.

PERRY

(into phone)

Yes, sir, I know that ... yeah, I know, this caught all of us with our pants down...

He picks up the paper and looks at the photo of Clark, Pete and Luthor with a mournful expression.

PERRY (CONT'D)

(into phone)

The bottom line is that I don't know. When Lex Luthor first announced he was going to run I never thought he'd make it this far. But now, with Ross to deliver the Mid-West...

He drops the paper down onto the desk in disgust. He takes a deep breath before saying what's really on his mind.

PERRY (CONT'D)

(into phone)

I think we have to face the distinct possibility that Lex might actually win this thing.

INT. DAILY PLANET - CITY ROOM -- DAY

Clark covers his gaff magnificently.

CLARK

I caught a late-night flight back to Smallville - my dad, he's having trouble with his heart...

Lois suddenly looks mortified.

LOIS

Oh my god - is he alright?

CLARK

Oh he's fine - Ma was pretty shaken up.

LOIS

Even so, that's a pretty impressive feat.

CLARK

(grins)

Think of all the frequent flier miles I'll have notched up.

They both laugh.

CLARK (CONT'D)

I'm going to get a coffee - you want something?

LOIS

No, I'm good.

Clark gets up and makes a smart exit, a look of relief on his face.

Lois watches him go with a thoughtful expression. After a moment she reaches into her pocket and pulls out a small notebook.

Inside one page is divided into two columns.

The first one reads 'Clark'.

And the second one reads 'Superman'.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. METROPOLIS CONSERVATORY -- NIGHT

From the night sky we PAN DOWN to reveal the Metropolis Conservatory - which is lit up bright as the event begins.

'Luthor for President' banners are everywhere.

A red carpet lined with press leads to the door. We can see Jimmy among the press crowd, snapping photos of the arriving dignitaries.

We PAN ACROSS to reveal Cat Grant, talking into her camera.

CAT

(in mid-flow)

...that's right Frank, we're live at the Metropolis Conservatory where the Luthor Campaign is about to begin possibly it's biggest night in it's campaign. Mr Luthor and Senator Ross are expected to give their keynote speech tonight, and here amid the bright lights of Metropolis, the city that is almost synonymous with Lex Luthor...

Across the scene Clark and Lois make their way up the red carpet, unnoticed among the politicians, celebrities and Metropolis high society. Lois shakes her head.

LOIS

Say what you like about Lex, he certainly knows how to get himself noticed.

CLARK

Don't remind me.

Lois gives him a look.

LOIS

If you don't want to do this we don't have to, we could get out of here--

CLARK

(resolute)

No - I promised Pete I'd come and show my support, so that's what I'm going to do.

Behind the press barrier Jimmy is still snapping photos. He looks up as Clark and Lois arrive.

JIMMY

Say cheese!

He snaps a photo.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Thank you very much.

LOIS

(grins)

No problem.

CLARK

You look like you're enjoying
yourself - the chance to photograph
Metropolis high society.

JIMMY

(sneer)

Yeah, so high it stinks. I don't
even know what...

He suddenly trails off - he's spotted something O.S. Clark
and Lois look...

Alexis is making her way up the red carpet wearing a figure-
hugging blue dress. She works the press with an easy charm.
Jimmy's jaw is on the floor.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Who is that?

LOIS

Eyes back in your head, kid - that's
Lex's daughter. Alexis.

And Jimmy's in love already. He begins snapping photos
like a man possessed.

INT. METROPOLIS CONSERVATORY -- NIGHT

Inside the place is packed out. At the centre of it all -
Lex Luthor, working the crowd, in full on PR assault.

Lois and Clark are stood on a balcony looking out across
the masses. Lois shakes her head and grins.

LOIS

Life-styles of the rich and famous,
huh? Wonder how many of these
poor schmucks Lex has paid off to
get their support.

CLARK

All of them probably.

(beat)

So - no regrets?

Lois gives him a questioning look.

CLARK (CONT'D)

I mean, this was nearly your life.
Ever regret giving it up?

LOIS

After what Lex tried to do to
Superman? Never in a million years.
More to the point, I don't think
Lex has ever forgiven either of us
for writing that piece that put
him on trial.

ANGLE - LUTHOR

He looks up and sees Lois and Clark on the balcony. The barest dark look crosses his face before turning back to his guests.

BACK TO SCENE

Clark and Lois, as before.

CLARK
So what do you think? Has he got
a chance of winning?

LOIS
I'd love to be able to say no...

She looks out at where Luthor is still working the floor.

LOIS (CONT'D)
But I can't.
(trying it on)
'President Luthor.' 'President
Luthor'.

Clark's face contorts into a look of disgust and Lois grins.

LOIS (CONT'D)
Yeah, that was pretty much my
reaction too--

PETE (O.S.)
Clark!

They both look up - Pete is barrelling towards them with a huge grin on his face.

CLARK
Pete!

PETE
(they shake hands)
Glad you could make it.

CLARK
This is quite the party.

PETE
I did think you might be impressed.

ANGLE - THE PARTY

down on the floor, Alexis is doing the rounds, meeting, greeting, charming ... she's a bombshell from every angle.

Sat at the bar, Jimmy downs a glass of champagne in one go before grabbing his camera and making his way over to her.

JIMMY
(uncertain)
Miss Luthor?

She turns, flashes a radiant smile - he goes bright red and holds up his camera.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

How about a few shots for the Daily Planet?

ALEXIS

Sure.

Jimmy grins and begins snapping photos. He's enjoying this far too much.

ANGLE - CLARK, PETE, LOIS

as before. Clark makes the introductions.

CLARK

This is...

LOIS

Lois Lane ... although I think we've met already, haven't we Senator Ross?

Pete looks at Lois as though seeing her for the first time ... and then it clicks.

PETE

You were the woman with the...

LOIS

At the party with the guy who liked the girl with the thing. Yeah, that's me.

Pete laughs, looking heartily embarrassed. Clark hasn't got a clue what's going on.

PETE

Now there's one night I wish we could all just forget.

CLARK

I actually think it's something you should tell me about--

PETE

No - I think that's something that both of us will take to our graves, right Miss Lane?

LOIS

Your secret's safe with me.

PETE

Good.

ANGLE - THE PARTY

Jimmy is still snapping shots of Alexis when a hand comes into frame, grabs his shoulder and pulls him back--

PERRY

What in the name of God's holy
trousers are you playing at, Olsen?
Get back to work!

JIMMY

(embarrassed)
Right ... sorry chief.

He vanishes into the crowd.

PERRY

(yelling after him)
And don't call me chief!

He turns back to find that Alexis has been joined by her
father.

LUTHOR

Perry.

PERRY

(they shake)
Lex.

LUTHOR

Glad you could make it...

ANGLE - CLARK, PETE, LOIS

Pete's in the middle of telling a joke...

PETE

...and all I can think of to say
is 'is that a water melon?'

Lois bursts out laughing - Clark looks slightly put out.

CLARK

Thanks for reminding me about that
one.

LOIS

You and Clark seem to have got up
to a lot back in the day...

PETE

Don't even get me started on what
happened on Prom night.

CLARK

(dangerous)
Pete, two words - Tequila Sunrise.

Pete laughs, going bright red.

PETE

For the sake of my dignity and in
the interests of good taste, I'm
going to shut up now. In fact...

(MORE)

PETE (CONT'D)
 (calling over his
 shoulder)
 Hey - we're over here!

A woman in a red dress detaches herself from the crowd.
 Clark's eyes go wide. It's Lana.

CLARK
 Lana?

LANA
 Surprise?

CLARK
 Good surprise!

He folds her into a long hug. Lois suddenly looks put
 out.

Clark and Lana finally break apart - Clark's grinning from
 ear to ear.

CLARK (CONT'D)
 I had no idea you were coming.

LANA
 Pete invited me.

PETE
 I could hardly turn up to this
 thing all by my lonesome - got to
 give the gossip rags something to
 talk about.

LOIS
 (darkly)
 I hope you're not talking about
 the Daily Planet.

PETE
 Don't worry, I'm not that brave.
 Or that stupid.

LOIS
 Not going to introduce me, Clark?

The situation has turned slightly frosty. Clark looks
 awkward.

CLARK
 Lois Lane, this is Lana Lang ...
 an old friend.

Lana smiles and offers a hand.

LANA
 It's a pleasure to finally meet
 you - Clark's told me so much about
 you?

Lois shakes Lana's hand and shoots a threatening look at Clark at the same time.

LOIS
Oh he has, has he? Kent, just
what have you been--

LUTHOR (O.S.)
Pete!

They all turns to see Luthor emerging out of the crowd with Alexis in tow. He spots Pete's company and a smile spreads over his face.

LUTHOR (CONT'D)
Now isn't this a reunion? Hello
Lois, Clark.

LOIS
(stiffly)
Lex.

Clark pointedly doesn't say anything as Luthor kisses Lois' hand.

LOIS (CONT'D)
Great party. Must have cost someone
an arm and a leg.

LUTHOR
(chuckles)
Insinuating again, Lois?

LOIS
My job.

LUTHOR
Of course. Well, I think we all
know each other - Alexis, I think
you've met Lois Lane and Clark
Kent?

ALEXIS
Once or twice...

Luthor's eye catches Lana and he recognises her. Things get noticeably dicier.

LUTHOR
Lana.

LANA
Lex.

It's suddenly gone awkward as hell ... Harlin arrives at precisely the right moment.

HARLIN
Excuse me, Mr Luthor, Senator Ross?

LUTHOR
Yes?

HARLIN

They're ready for you now.

Pete drains the last of his drink in one go.

PETE

Duty calls.

LUTHOR

(to crowd)

It was great seeing you all again -
have a great night.

As Luthor and Pete depart, Lana practically runs out of frame. Clark follows her, leaving Lois and Alexis behind.

LOIS

Nice to see you back in town,
Alexis. The society column hasn't
been the same since you left.

ALEXIS

I'll take that as a compliment.

Her tone gives nothing away. Lois goes back to fishing.

LOIS

I heard about what happened in
Oxford.

ALEXIS

You shouldn't believe the British
press - it's enough to make your
crowd look accurate.

Lois laughs politely, but there is a definite frosty vibe
in the air.

ANGLE - CLARK AND LANA

Clark joins Lana by the railing looking down over the party
below.

CLARK

Are you alright?

LANA

I think so, I just had to...

(beat)

I thought I could handle it. But
seeing him again, after what
happened...

Clark puts a supportive arm around her shoulders.

CLARK

I know.

ANGLE - LOIS AND ALEXIS

as before. The two of them make their way down onto the main floor - Clark and Lana can be seen in the background following them down.

LOIS

So, how long are you staying for this time? Just long enough to get another blank cheque from daddy before vanishing again?

ALEXIS

I don't know ... I think I might stick around this time. Looks like dad's going places at last.

LOIS

When has Lex ever not been going places?

Alexis gives her a look.

ALEXIS

When he was with you.

One hell of a look passes between Lois and Alexis, but at that moment Harlin takes to the stage.

HARLIN

Ladies and gentlemen, may I have your attention please?

Everyone's attention turns to the stage as Harlin smiles for the crowd.

HARLIN (CONT'D)

It's my great pleasure to present to you the men of the moment ... Senator Pete Ross, and the next President of the United States, Mr Lex Luthor!

Huge applause from the crowd as Luthor and Pete take to the stage. They both smile into the crowd.

LUTHOR

What do you think, Pete? Think we're going to win?

PETE

(grinning wildly)
I think there's an outside chance.

LUTHOR

(smiling)
An outside chance. Of course I'm going to be the next President of the United States - when was the last time Lex Luthor got involved in a project and didn't see it through to success!

Much laughter from the crowd again.

LUTHOR (CONT'D)

Seriously, though ... my family history has been tied to the history of our beloved Metropolis for generations. Like my father before me, I have worked tirelessly, selflessly, to make this city a shining symbol of what humanity at it's best can bring forth.

(beat)

And look around! We did it!

Huge applause and some cheering from the crowd - Pete is applauding as loudly as anyone else.

LUTHOR (CONT'D)

I had my doubts. But I realised I had to try. And with God's help, I succeeded!

As the speech continues, Clark's head suddenly shoots up and we HEAR what he hears ... the pounding and thudding of a human heartbeat going over-speed...

LUTHOR (CONT'D)

And I realised that Metropolis is not just a city ... it is a vision!

Clark looks around urgently - something's about to happen.

LUTHOR (CONT'D)

A vision that must be shared with the whole country.

Lana sees Clark looking around.

LANA

Clark, what's happening?

CLARK

Something's wrong?

LUTHOR

(continuing unawares)

And so in service to that vision I stand before you now...

And then Clark sees it - a woman's head pushing it's way towards the front of the crowd.

LUTHOR (CONT'D)

Not as a candidate of the Republicans or the Democrats or the Conservatives or the Independents - for their world view is too narrow and outmoded--

WOMAN (O.S.)

(yelling)

LUTHOR!

Luthor stops in mid flow to see an irate looking WOMAN (30s) in a long overcoat force her way to the front of the throng.

Luthor covers his surprise with a quick smile.

LUTHOR

Can I help you?

WOMAN

You can die!

She rips open her coat - revealing a huge suicide bomb strapped around her mid-section--!

Everyone SCREAMS--!

And then, abruptly, TIME STOPS.

Or at least it appears to - we immediately realise that everyone is still moving but at a ridiculously slow pace ... Clark is still moving at normal pace, and we realise that Clark is in fact moving at super-speed.

He charges forward, discarding his clothes as he goes - to reveal the familiar blue-and-red uniform...

He reaches the woman, grabs her arm--

And at that moment TIME SPEEDS BACK UP!

People scream as Superman grabs the woman by the waist and rockets STRAIGHT UPWARDS through the roof--

EXT. SKIES ABOVE METROPOLIS -- NIGHT

Superman and the woman rocket straight upwards--

Superman rips the bomb jacket from around her waist with one hand and hurls it straight upwards -- it explodes harmlessly 10,000 feet above the city.

SUPERMAN

Are you alright?

WOMAN

What did you do that for?

SUPERMAN

Whatever Lex Luthor has done to you, it's not worth dying over.

WOMAN

You don't understand...

She's broken down - tears fall down her face.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

If you can't stop Lex Luthor ...
then who can?

And just for a moment the look of doubt returns to Superman's face.

INT. LUTHOR'S LIMO -- NIGHT

TIGHT on a TV set - Cat Grant at WGBS.

CAT

(on screen)

...at the last minute by the arrival of Superman, who was able to remove the threat without any loss of life. In a direct contrast to what our would-be suicide bomber would have liked, the attempt on his life has given Mr Luthor a seven point rise in opinion polls, widening his lead on Republican candidate--

The TV flickers off.

LUTHOR

Fascinating...

Luthor, Alexis and Harlin are crammed into the back of the limo. Luthor and Alexis have identical triumphant grins on their faces.

ALEXIS

Almost as if someone had planned it this way, wouldn't you agree daddy?

LUTHOR

(smiles)

Almost.

HARLIN

One thing I still don't know, sir. How could you have guaranteed that Superman would appear in time to stop her?

LUTHOR

I couldn't.

He leans back in his seat, contented smile on his face.

LUTHOR (CONT'D)

I had Mercy and Hope on standby in case he didn't show. But one thing I've learned about Superman is that wherever you find Lois Lane, Superman is never that far behind.

EXT. METROPOLIS STREETS -- NIGHT

A cab drives through the streets.

CLARK (prelap)

I think this is me...

INT. BACK OF CAB -- NIGHT

Clark and Lois are sat in the back.

LOIS
So ... you and Lana seem pretty close.

CLARK
Yeah, yeah we are.
(off look)
What?

LOIS
(grins mischievously)
Never said a word.

CLARK
You didn't have to.
(beat)
Lana and I are good friends.

LOIS
(fishing)
Just good friends?

CLARK
Just good friends.

Lois smiles slightly as the cab pulls to a stop. Clark pays the cabbie and gets out.

CLARK (CONT'D)
See you at work tomorrow?

LOIS
You will. Goodnight Clark.

CLARK
Goodnight Lois.

The door closes and he enters his building. Lois watches him go before pulling out her notebook and scribbling something into her 'Superman' column.

EXT. LEXCORP TOWER -- NIGHT

Just to establish.

LUTHOR (prelap)
The important thing now is not to lose momentum...

INT. LUTHOR'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

Luthor and Alexis sweep into the office.

LUTHOR
We've got their attention, now we have to--

They both stop dead - a figure in a red cape is stood looking out over the city with his back to them.

LUTHOR (CONT'D)

What the hell--?

TY-ZOR

You have something that belongs to me, Lex Luthor...

The man turns and we see Ty-Zor in full battle armour, complete with red cape and red 'S' shield covering his chest, a sword at his hip.

TY-ZOR (CONT'D)

And I want it back.

LUTHOR

(yelling)

SECURITY!

A concealed door bursts open and several dozen heavily armed marines burst in - they open fire--

Ty-Zor's eyes flash red - the bullets disintegrate in front of him--

He flashes forward, cutting the security guards down in seconds--

And Luthor finds himself slammed up against the wall with Ty-Zor's hand around his throat.

TY-ZOR

Curious ... ever since we arrived I could feel something different.

ALEXIS

Let him go!

She grabs Ty-Zor's arm - he lashes out and sends her flying backwards with no apparent effort. Ty-Zor gets right into Luthor's face.

TY-ZOR

You have something that belongs to us - a probe that crashed on this planet. I want it back.

He steps back and Luthor drops to the ground, gasping for air.

TY-ZOR (CONT'D)

And I want to know everything you can tell me about the man you refer to as...

(with distaste)

Superman.

INT. CLARK'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

A knock on the door - he opens it to reveal Lana stood outside.

LANA
Want some company?

CLARK
Always.

INT. SAME -- LATER

Clark pours two coffees, walks over to where Lana is stood looking out at the city.

CLARK
Here.

LANA
Thanks.

They sip their coffee in silence for a few seconds.

CLARK
It was hard for you tonight, wasn't it?

There's a long silence ... then Lana nods quietly.

LANA
I thought I could handle it. But then I saw him again, and ... and all the feelings came back.
(beat)
Clark, I feel terrible for saying this, but ... there's a part of me wishes Luthor had died in that explosion.

There is a shared dark look between the two of them.

INT. LUTHOR'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

Ty-Zor watches Luthor's wall of monitors, all of which show various images of Superman in action. He looks disgusted.

LUTHOR
(cautious)
So Superman is ... one of yours?

TY-ZOR
He is a Kryptonian, yes.
(beat)
But he is not one of us. He could never possibly be one of us.

Luthor can't help but ask...

LUTHOR
And who are you?

Ty-Zor turns to face him.

TY-ZOR
My name is Ty-Zor. Warrior of the
Planet Krypton.

LUTHOR
I had been given to understand
that Superman was the last of his
people.

Ty-Zor lets out an ironic laugh.

TY-ZOR
I'm sure that's what he would want
you to believe. The truth, however,
is very different...

DISSOLVE TO:

*EXTREME CLOSE on the face of a young baby, sitting up,
looking straight at us.*

After a moment a hand comes into the frame to touch the
baby's face ... a hand wearing a ring adorned with the
familiar 'S' insignia.

JOR-EL (O.S.)
Goodbye, my son.

We PULL BACK from the baby's face and we are...

INT. JOR-EL'S LAB (KRYPTON) -- DAY

JOR-EL and LARA, standing over the small pod containing
their son, tears in their eyes. Jor-El rests a finger on
his son's cheek one final time and he steps back to allow
the small capsule to close.

He takes Lara into his arms as the ship rises, turns and
takes flight out through the open window.

EXT. SPACE ABOVE KRYPTON

The small pod escapes from the atmosphere of Krypton and
sets off on its journey.

INT. JOR-EL'S LAB (KRYPTON) -- DAY

Jor-El and Lara watch until the pod is right out of sight.

JOR-EL
Forgive me.

LARA
You have given him all that a father
can - a chance at life?

JOR-EL
But will that be enough?

LARA

We will never know.

The two of them embrace ... and at that moment a VIOLENT QUAKE rocks the lab. Equipment smashes. Jor-El holds Lara tight, supporting her.

EXT. KANDOR CITY, KRYPTON -- DAY

VARIOUS shots from around the city, all showing the inevitable destruction...

Quakes rock the buildings--

Huge cracks split open in the ground--

Pools of vivid green liquid pour from the cracks--

The air is thick with SCREAMS ... but one sound punctures through all this--

The WHINE OF THE ENGINE OF A SHIP.

INT. JOR-EL'S LAB (KRYPTON) -- DAY

The sound can be heard in the lab. They both rush to the window.

LARA

What's happening?

JOR-EL

I'm not sure...

They look out of the window ... and then they see it. Across the city a series of shuttles are being powered up. A look of wild hope crosses Lara's face.

LARA

They're evacuating ... the council must have ordered an evacuation!

JOR-EL

No ... no, I think something far worse is happening here.

She looks at Jor-El, confused ... and then at that moment the door to the lab is thrown open.

Six Kryptonian soldiers in full battle-dress march in, looking menacing. In the lead is a man we recognise as a YOUNGER Her-al.

JOR-EL (CONT'D)

What is the meaning of this?

YOUNG HER-AL

Jor-El, your presence is required at once.

JOR-EL

Required by whom?

YOUNG HER-AL

Kata-Zor.

Jor-El and Lara exchange worried looks - this is not good news.

EXT. LANDING PLATFORM, KRYPTON -- DAY

Her-al leads Jor-El and Lara up the steps of the landing platform where a gigantic ship is being readied for launch. Jor-El looks sadly around - all around them we see signs of the approaching doom of Krypton.

They reach the landing platform. By the gangplank of the ship we see a HUGE MAN in full battle-dress barking orders.

HUGE MAN

Quickly now, if you value your lives!

YOUNG HER-AL

My Lord General.

The man turns to face Her-al and Jor-El and his face curls into a cruel sneer. He is huge and muscular, a fighter all his life with an unmistakably cruel air: KATA-ZOR.

KATA-ZOR

Jor-El, good, now everything is in place.

JOR-EL

We are evacuating?

KATA-ZOR

We are.

JOR-EL

But the council...

KATA-ZOR

(angry)

The council are a group of weak, frightened old men without the will to do what needs to be done.

A beat - he composes himself.

KATA-ZOR (CONT'D)

We should have listened to you when we had the chance, Jor-El - now we are heeding your warning.

JOR-EL

You are taking this action without the approval of the council?

Kata-Zor smiles again.

KATA-ZOR

At this point the council is irrelevant. It is the time for the men of vision, like you and I, to take the lead, Jor-El. All we require from you is a destination.

JOR-EL

A destination?

Kata-Zor steps forward, lowers his voice so only Jor-El can hear.

KATA-ZOR

There's no need to mince words here, Jor-El, not now - I know you've sent your son away to a place of safety, and in doing that you have guaranteed a future for the people of Krypton. Give me that destination and we will save as many as we can before the end, take them to this place of safety and establish a new order...

JOR-EL

With yourself at the head?

Kata-Zor looks fazed. He quickly covers it.

KATA-ZOR

Jor-El, be reasonable. Look around you - this is not the time for this conversation--

JOR-EL

No, I think this is exactly the time for this conversation.

KATA-ZOR

We have a chance for our people to survive...

JOR-EL

For our people to survive, yes, but not our way of life. That will all change with you as our leader.

Kata-Zor bristles, as Jor-El gets right in his face.

JOR-EL (CONT'D)

I know what you are, Kata-Zor - a warrior with no battles to fight. Your plans for conquering new worlds were shattered by the council keeping you on a short leash, as *they were right to do!* I will not allow you to turn our people into a race of conquerors, General.

Kata-Zor steps back.

KATA-ZOR
You will not help me?

JOR-EL
Never.

KATA-ZOR
I was afraid you'd say that.

And with no warning he draws a dagger AND HURLS IT AT LARA!
It embeds itself in her throat.

JOR-EL
Lara!

He rushes to her side as her life's blood pours from the
wound in her throat. Behind them there is a massive
explosion - one of the crystalline buildings has exploded.

JOR-EL (CONT'D)
Lara...

She struggles to form words, but she cannot and a moment
later she slumps to the ground, dead.

JOR-EL (CONT'D)
No...

His expression of sadness turns into one of pure rage.

JOR-EL (CONT'D)
No!

He leaps to his feet, snatches a sword from a stunned
soldier and rushes Kata-Zor. Caught off-guard, the General
takes a hit full across the chest ... his armour deflects
the blow, turning it aside..

He spins, knocks the sword from Jor-El's hands and punches
him hard in the face. He grabs the scientist around the
throat with his huge gauntlets and SQUEEZES..

KATA-ZOR
I didn't want it to be this way
between us, Jor-El ... I hoped we
could be partners, joint voices in
the new order ... but now you have
condemned yourself.

Jor-El goes limp ... dead. Kata-Zor lets go and Jor-El
slumps to the ground.

And he turns and strides up the gangplank. His men carry
Jor-El's unconscious form behind him. The gangplank
retracts and the ship launches, leaving Lara's bloodied
body behind.

EXT. SPACE ABOVE KRYPTON

Kata-Zor's shuttle clears the atmosphere of the planet.

As we pull back we see another shuttle, then a third, then a fourth, then more and more ... thousands of small shuttles escaping Krypton, until eventually they seem to fill the whole screen...

TY-ZOR (prelap)
It should have ended that day...

And we--

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. LUTHOR'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

As before.

TY-ZOR
But we could not get what we needed.

He turns and looks out of the window, across the city.

TY-ZOR (CONT'D)
Now we are a dying people, the few
of us who are left condemned to
wander between the stars for what
time is left to us.
(beat)
All these years, our only hope has
been that one day we may learn the
location of the world to which Jor-
El sent his son ... a world that
would provide us with sanctuary.

Luthor and Alexis exchange looks - he's seen an opportunity.

LUTHOR
Sanctuary?

Ty-Zor turns to face him.

TY-ZOR
Sanctuary.

LUTHOR
Maybe I can help with that.

Ty-Zor looks suspicious.

TY-ZOR
What do you mean?

LUTHOR
We are experiencing some changes
in our political situation here...

TY-ZOR
Your affairs are of no interest to
me, Lex Luthor--

LUTHOR
Then maybe you ought to start taking
an interest.

This gets Ty-Zor's attention.

LUTHOR (CONT'D)

In just a few weeks, I am going to be elected President of the United States ... the most powerful man in the world.

(beat)

I think we could help each other.

TY-ZOR

Explain.

LUTHOR

You have the ability to do me a great service, and in return I will do one for you.

He steps forward towards Ty-Zor,

LUTHOR (CONT'D)

Eliminate Superman for me, Ty-Zor of Krypton ... and in return I will give sanctuary to your people here on Earth.

(beat)

Do we have a bargain?

He holds out his hand. Ty-Zor considers for a moment, then nods.

TY-ZOR

A bargain.

They clasp arms. An alliance has been formed.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. METROPOLIS -- MORNING

The sun rises over the city.

We PAN WITH two figures, flying high above the city ... as we close in we recognise them as Ty-Zor and Her-al.

INT. LUTHOR'S OFFICE -- MORNING

Luthor is stood in front of his monitors - all of which show Ty-Zor and Her-al from various angles.

The door opens and Alexis enters.

ALEXIS

Dad?

He holds up a hand for silence. She crosses to his side and stands watching with him.

EXT. METROPOLIS -- MORNING

Ty-Zor and Her-al sweep low across the bay ... one look at their faces shows the pure exhilaration they are feeling.

INT. LUTHOR'S OFFICE -- MORNING

Luthor and Alexis continue to watch.

LUTHOR

They seem to be enjoying themselves.

ALEXIS

Are you sure this is a good idea?

Luthor turns to regard his daughter.

LUTHOR

If they can eliminate Superman,
then absolutely.

ALEXIS

And later? When we have a whole
fleet of them arriving on Earth?

(beat)

I hope you know what you're doing,
daddy.

She turns and walks out. Luthor turns back to his monitors.

LUTHOR

So do I.

EXT. METROPOLIS -- MORNING

Ty-Zor and Her-al swoop through the city, eventually coming
in to land on the roof of the LexCorp Tower.

HER-AL

Magnificent...

TY-ZOR

The light of the yellow sun. I can
see why Jor-El chose this world.

HER-AL

It's too bright. It's nothing
like home.

TY-ZOR

Our home is dead. This is our
home now.

He looks out across the city.

TY-ZOR (CONT'D)

Look at it, Her-al. After all
these years of looking, we've
finally found it. The sanctuary.

He gives Her-al a triumphant look.

TY-ZOR (CONT'D)

We did it, old friend. We made it
at last.

HER-AL

And what about him? What about
Kal-El?

A moment of silence before Ty-Zor answers.

TY-ZOR

I will deal with him myself.

INT. DAILY PLANET - CITY ROOM -- DAY

Jimmy is sat at his desk, his camera plugged into the computer. He's staring at the screen, enraptured - all the images are of Alexis Luthor.

Lois walks past, catches sight and doubles back.

LOIS

Jimmy?

He doesn't answer - he's got other things on his mind. Clark looks up from his desk - Lois signals him and he comes over.

The two of them stand behind him for a moment until Lois can't bear it any longer. She leans down, her lips close to his ear--

LOIS (CONT'D)

She's out of your league, kid.

Jimmy jumps violently, looks up to see Clark and Lois, heartily embarrassed.

JIMMY

What? No, I -- that is, it's not
what you think, it's just--

Clark is trying very hard not to laugh. Lois claps Jimmy on the shoulder.

LOIS

Don't worry Jimmy - your secret's
safe with us.

The two of them walk off - Jimmy looks mortified. He switches the screen off and tries to act inconspicuous.

Clark sits back down at his desk - Lois parks herself on the edge and gives him a searching look.

CLARK

What?

LOIS

Just wondering ... you pulled
another one of your trademark
disappearing acts. Just before
Superman turned up.

It takes just a second for Clark to get his poker face in place, but Lois is acting nonchalant - she picks up the paper and begins to flip through it.

LOIS (CONT'D)
It's funny, really.

CLARK
What is?

LOIS
Well, whenever Superman turns up ... I mean I've seen him, he's saved my life a couple of times. I've seen him with Jimmy, with Lex, with other people...

She lowers the paper and looks him in the eye.

LOIS (CONT'D)
But I've never seen him with you.

She closes the paper and drops it back to the desk.

LOIS (CONT'D)
Funny that.

She turns and walks away, looking very nonchalant. Clark watches her go with a look that suggests he doesn't believe a word of it.

CLARK (prelap)
She knows.

CUT TO:

EXT. KENT FARM -- DAY

Clark, Jonathan and Martha walk up the path towards the path.

CLARK
I'm sure of it. She knows.

MARTHA
How can she know?

CLARK
Lois isn't stupid, mom. I suppose it was only a matter of time.

JONATHAN
Or you could just be over-reacting, which, lets be honest, is probably the more likely option.

CLARK
I really don't know.

Jonathan and Martha exchange worried looks as they enter the farm.

INT. KENT FARM -- DAY

Scene continues as the three of them enter the house.

JONATHAN

In hindsight, I suppose ... well, maybe it wasn't such a good idea to surround yourself with journalists.

MARTHA

Particularly journalists as good as Lois Lane.

CLARK

Yeah, well, it really wasn't an option. I needed to be in a position where I could hear about problems as they happened, and the Planet is the best place to do that.

(beat)

So what am I supposed to do now? Should I tell her?

JONATHAN

Absolutely not!

The tone startles both Clark and Martha. Jonathan stands his ground.

CLARK

So what am I supposed to do? Carry on lying to her? To everyone?

JONATHAN

Clark, protecting the secret identity is part and parcel with the whole Superman thing. Lois is a journalist - if you told her your secret, she'd print it and it'd be front page news around the world within twenty-four hours.

CLARK

She wouldn't do that?

JONATHAN

Wouldn't she? Can you say that with absolute certainty?

This catches Clark off guard.

CLARK

I trust Lois, dad.

JONATHAN

Yes, well, you trusted Lex Luthor too and we all know how that one turned out...

MARTHA

Jonathan!

Jonathan holds up his hands.

JONATHAN

I'm done, alright, I'm done.

He goes into the kitchen to make coffee. Martha turns to Clark.

MARTHA

Clark, this is a decision you need to think about very carefully.

CLARK

It may not be a decision if she already knows--

MARTHA

We don't know that she does yet, not for certain. She might only suspect. Right now it sounds like she's just fishing for information.

She steps towards him.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

You need to think about this. If you tell her, then you're going to be putting her in a lot of danger. People could use her to get to you.

This is a point Clark clearly hadn't considered. Martha looks him in the eye.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

At the end of the day, this is a decision that only you can make. But when you do make it, I want you to have considered the repercussions of this from every angle. Because all you need is one wrong person to know the secret and then your days as Superman could be at an end.

Jonathan appears in the doorway again.

JONATHAN

She's right, son.

From the look on his face, Clark knows it too.

INT. CADMUS LABS HANGER -- NIGHT

Ty-Zor's ship is parked in the middle of the hanger.

HER-AL (prelap)

My Lord?

INT. KRYPTONIAN SHIP - CABIN -- NIGHT

Her-al enters the cabin to find Ty-Zor sat on the floor in a meditative trance.

His eyes open as Her-al enters.

HER-AL

My Lord ... it is time.

EXT. CLARK'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Just to establish.

A KNOCK on the door.

CLARK (prelap)

Just a minute...

INT. CLARK'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Clark opens the door to find Lois stood outside. She looks edgy and tense.

CLARK

Lois, are you alright?

LOIS

No ... no I'm not, not really.

CLARK

Come in.

He steps back to allow her in.

CLARK (CONT'D)

What's all this about?

Lois turns to regard him frankly.

LOIS

When I first started at the Planet, Perry told me that a journalist must do three things - believe none of what you hear, half of what you see ... and everything you write.

Clark looks deeply confused. Lois begins pacing up and down, teasing out her thoughts.

LOIS (CONT'D)

Ever since you started at the Planet, there's been something odd about you. At first I shrugged it off, but the more time I spent with you the more obvious it became. You have a secret. You keep it so well most people wouldn't even know it was there, but I've spent a whole life fining out the stuff

(MORE)

LOIS (CONT'D)

other people don't want me to know,
so I've developed a filter for
this kind of thing.

(beat)

So I know.

She stops pacing and faces Clark - there's a tense moment.

LOIS (CONT'D)

I know, Clark.

(beat)

I know you're Superman.

Another tense moment ... and then Clark starts laughing.

CLARK

Superman? Me? I mean, come on,
Lois, that's--

LOIS

Crazy, I know. That was what I
thought the moment it occurred to
me ... but then things started
happening. Things that just didn't
add up - in and of themselves they
wouldn't have been a problem and
most people wouldn't have noticed,
but now ... I have to know, Clark.

There's something very wrong with the situation here - a
tense vibe in the air. Clark senses it immediately.

CLARK

Lois, what are you...

LOIS

(reaches into her
pocket)

I have to know.

He pulls something out - silver flashes in the light--

A GUN.

Clark recoils involuntarily.

CLARK

Lois, what are you?

LOIS

I know you'll never admit it to me
... but I have to see it for myself.

A tense standoff.

CLARK

(trying to be
reasonable)

Lois, you really don't want to do
this--

BANG!

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. KRYPTONIAN SHIP - CABIN -- NIGHT

Ty-Zor is arming up for battle...

He snaps on his gauntlets and greaves...

His breastplate containing the 'S' shield...

Snaps his scabbard into place on his hip...

Pulls his cape on around his shoulders...

Her-al watches from the door as Ty-Zor holds his sword up to the light.

HER-AL

You're going alone?

TY-ZOR

Alone.

He turns to face Her-al, his sword held in front of him.

TY-ZOR (CONT'D)

Let no man follow me, Her-al. I want to face Kal-El - this 'Superman' - alone for the first time.

His sword slides into the scabbard.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. CLARK'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Seconds later:

TIGHT on Lois, holding the smoking gun, trembling...

GENERAL P.O.V:

And we see Clark stood before her, perfectly alright ... and looking very angry.

LOIS

Oh my God...!

CLARK

Dammit Lois...

He turns and walks away, trying to comprehend this ... he turns back to face her.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Lois, what on Earth were you thinking?

LOIS
You're alive...

CLARK
If I hadn't been Superman, you
could have killed Clark Kent!

A tense beat ... then Lois stops trembling and smiles.
She holds up the gun.

LOIS
What with? A blank?

It takes a moment for the full impact of this to register
with Clark. Lois walks towards him.

CLARK
Lois...

She reaches up and takes off his glasses. He regards her
with his blue eyes.

CLARK (CONT'D)
Lois, you ... you need to
understand...

LOIS
Shh...

She reaches up and presses a finger to his lips.

LOIS (CONT'D)
I understand. I also know what a
burden this must be for you - having
to keep this secret from everyone,
unable to tell people ... believe
me, I know what that feels like.

CLARK
How can you?

A beat - then:

LOIS
Because of this...

And she reaches up and kisses him hard on the mouth.
There's a moment ... and then he kisses back, desperate
kisses of passion...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SAME -- LATER

Clark and Lois are sat on the sofa, his arm around her
shoulders, her head resting on his chest.

CLARK
How long have you known?

LOIS

I didn't. Not until now. But I've suspected for a long time. The sheer number of times you'd vanish and then the next thing anyone knew Superman was in action saving lives...

(beat)

Things didn't add up. I was always taught that the simplest explanation is usually the correct one.

CLARK

Who told you that?

Lois sits up and looks him in the eye.

LOIS

You did.

(beat)

Guess you do know what you're talking about sometimes, Smallville.

CLARK

I don't suppose there's any chance you're ever going to stop calling me that, is there?

LOIS

Not a chance in hell...

(beat)

Unless you want me to start calling you Superman around the office...

Clark laughs and Lois reaches forward ... they kiss again just as--

TY-ZOR (O.S.)

(yelling)

KAL-EL!

Clark REACTS just as--

BANG! Something EXPLODES OFF-SCREEN--

LOIS

What the hell?

They both race to the window - red light is coming from outside.

LOIS (CONT'D)

Clark?

CLARK

Yeah?

They look out of the window - the horizon has lit up bright red with fire...

LOIS

I think you'd better go to work.

EXT. METROPOLIS -- NIGHT

Superman FLASHES THROUGH the city at high speed.

EXT. ABOVE PLAZA -- NIGHT

Superman comes to an abrupt halt in mid-air above a crowded shopping plaza. Red light illuminates the look of horror on his face.

SUPERMAN

God...

The plaza is in flames. We PAN UP to reveal that the flames have a pattern and form a symbol--

The 'S' shield, etched in flame on the plaza.

Screams come from all directions - then Superman hears it again.

TY-ZOR (O.S.)

(screaming)

KAL-EL!

Superman looks up - and sees him. Stood on the top of a nearby building, iconic and terrifying. Ty-Zor.

Superman flashes up to face him.

SUPERMAN

Alright, I'm going to give you one chance--

He stops dead - his eyes fixed on the 'S' shield on Ty-Zor's chest.

SUPERMAN (CONT'D)

What the...?

TY-ZOR

Surprised?

And with no warning he launches himself at Superman catching him right in the stomach--

Superman is caught off-guard, finds himself flying backwards--

INT. OFFICES -- NIGHT

CRASH!! --Superman crashes through the glass window and smashes down onto the floor. Dazed, he looks up--

Ty-Zor is hovering in mid-air outside, watching him coldly.

SUPERMAN

(to himself)

How--

TY-ZOR

Come out and fight...

(MORE)

TY-ZOR (CONT'D)
 (spits it out)
Superman.

Superman gets to his feet and flies out of the window.

EXT. ABOVE PLAZA -- NIGHT

Superman flies out - he stops twenty metres away from Ty-Zor, sizing him up.

TY-ZOR
 What's the matter, Kal-El?
 Surprised to see me?

SUPERMAN
 Who are you?

TY-ZOR
 The last thing you will ever see.

And he launches himself at Superman again--

Superman dodges - Ty-Zor halts in mid-air and turns to face him again.

TY-ZOR (CONT'D)
 Coward!

He launches himself right at Superman - this time Superman launches right back at him--

The two COLLIDE in mid-air - Ty-Zor grabs Superman by the throat and begins to fly straight down--

SMASHING into the pavement below - huge cracks appear around them in all directions--

They have landed in the middle of the flaming 'S' - Ty-Zor is on Superman in seconds, his hands around Superman's throat, squeezing--

TY-ZOR (CONT'D)
 On this world you could be a God
 among men, Kal-El - and yet you
 choose to become a champion,
 flaunting your heritage while your
 people wander the stars, exiled to
 die in the cold of space...

SUPERMAN
 (choking)
 Who ... are you...

TY-ZOR
 Remember the name Ty-Zor of Krypton,
Superman - it's the last thought
 you will ever have.

Superman's eyes FLASH RED - Ty-Zor howls and pulls back, his hands blistering in front of him--

In seconds Superman is up - but before he can do anything, Ty-Zor is on him--

TY-ZOR (CONT'D)
You are weak...

Ty-Zor attacks, savage, deadly - FISTS, BOOTS, BRAWLING, MESSY--

TY-ZOR (CONT'D)
You are a traitor...

He lands a gut-punch in Superman's stomach - Superman flies backwards through the fire, smashing into the ground some distance away.

TY-ZOR (CONT'D)
You are a coward.

He marches towards Superman, drawing his sword. He rests the blade onto Superman's throat.

TY-ZOR (CONT'D)
Just like your father!

Superman looks up into Ty-Zor's blazing eyes--

TY-ZOR (CONT'D)
Remember this, Superman...
(beat)
This is just the beginning.

He sheathes his sword and takes flight, flying straight up--

And in the roar of a sonic boom, he's gone, leaving Superman lying dazed and confused on the ground.

A car screeches to a halt - Lois practically flies out, running across to where Superman is lying on the ground.

LOIS
(anguished)
SUPERMAN!

She rushes to his side, dropping to her knees beside him.

LOIS (CONT'D)
My god, are you--?

SUPERMAN
I'm okay.

She helps him to his feet.

SUPERMAN (CONT'D)
I'll be...

He looks up - sees the civilians in all directions, silent, staring at him.

Staring with fear.

SUPERMAN (CONT'D)

I'll be fine...

From the look on his face we can tell this is anything but the truth.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE TO:

TV NEWS REPORTS

QUICK, FLASHING REPORTS - TALKING HEADS that vanish almost immediately as though someone is flicking through various news reports.

WITNESS #1

--Two of them, going at it like nothing I ever seen before--

WITNESS #2

--Seen Superman take some punishment, but never anything like this--

WITNESS #3

--Gotta ask yourself how this could happen--

WITNESS #4

--Been here for a few years now, and he never told us there were more like him, makes you wonder what else he's not telling us--

WITNESS #5

--How can we possibly trust him again after this--?

The image FLASHES TO:

WGBS NEWS:

With Cat Grant reporting:

CAT

--Reaction pouring in to last night's battle in the skies above Metropolis, between Superman and the mysterious flying visitor...

INT. KENT FARM -- MORNING

TIGHT on a TV - an aerial shot of the Metropolis plaza, the 'S' symbol now burnt black onto the ground, stones cracked from the battle.

CAT

(on screen)

This is all that remains of the Metropolis Plaza, in the aftermath
(MORE)

CAT (CONT'D)
of the epic battle that took place
just last night...

GENERAL P.O.V.

Clark, Martha and Jonathan watch in silence.

INT. LANA'S HOUSE -- MORNING

Lana watches the TV, concerned as hell.

CAT (O.S.)
Although no life was lost during
the conflict...

INT. DAILY PLANET - CITY ROOM -- MORNING

The staff watch in silence. Lois, Jimmy and Perry clearly
visible in the front row.

CAT (O.S.)
Collateral damage to the plaza was
considerable, with estimates placing
the damage at--

INT. KENT FARM -- MORNING

CLICK. The screen flicks off - Clark turns to see Jonathan
holding the remote.

JONATHAN
I think we've seen enough of that.

Martha puts her arm around Clark's shoulders.

MARTHA
Clark, are you--

CLARK
Not even close.

The phone rings. Martha grabs it, picks it up--

MARTHA
(into phone)
Hello? Lana - yes, he's fine--

She shoots Clark a questioning look - Clark mouths 'no'
and Martha nods.

MARTHA (CONT'D)
(smoothly)
He's just a bit shaken up ... I'm
sure he'll call you when he's
alright.
(beat)
Yes, I'll tell him you said so.
Bye Lana.

She hangs up.

CLARK

How is she?

MARTHA

Worried - who can blame her. She said if you needed someone to talk to--

CLARK

I know.

MARTHA

You can't hide out here forever.

CLARK

I know that too.

He stands up and begins pacing, looking frustrated. Jonathan walks up to him.

JONATHAN

Clark ... this man, this 'Ty-Zor'..

CLARK

He knew me as Kal-El. Outside the three of us, no-one knows that name.

(beat)

No-one on Earth.

He turns to face his parents.

CLARK (CONT'D)

He could fly. He had all my powers. And he had the symbol.

Neither Jonathan or Martha knows how to respond to this.

CLARK (CONT'D)

I think he's the genuine article. I think he's from Krypton.

MARTHA

I thought Krypton was destroyed.

JONATHAN

Jor-El said you were the only survivor.

CLARK

So did I.

(beat)

Apparently not. Some of them must have survived...

He turns away again, staring out of the window at the endless fields of wheat.

CLARK (CONT'D)

What the hell kind of planet am I from?

Jonathan and Martha exchange looks - it's an answer none of them has.

EXT. LEXCORP TOWER -- DAY

Just to establish.

INT. LUTHOR'S OFFICE -- DAY

Luthor and Alexis stand before the wall of monitors, watching images of the fight between Superman and Ty-Zor.

ALEXIS

Precisely what have we unleashed here?

LUTHOR

What is necessary to do the job.

The door opens - they both turn to see Ty-Zor stride in off the balcony.

TY-ZOR

You wanted to see me.

LUTHOR

(not looking at him)

Yes. Pause.

The monitors freeze. Luthor turns to face Ty-Zor.

LUTHOR (CONT'D)

You assured me that killing Superman would be no problem.

TY-ZOR

It won't be.

LUTHOR

So explain to me why you had him down, your sword to his throat - and you just flew off?

TY-ZOR

Last night was an ... exercise.

LUTHOR

An exercise in what?

TY-ZOR

Knowing your enemy is the first step to defeating him. I've heard of Kal-El my whole life - last night I met him.

(beat)

Now I know how he thinks and how he fights. And I have caused the people of this world to doubt their protector.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. MONORAIL STATION -- CONTINUOUS

A huge burning train wreck fills the screen. Superman staggers out of the inferno, a wounded woman held in his arms.

SUPERMAN

We've got wounded people in here,
I need help--

He looks up - everyone has flinched back from him.

They're afraid.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. LUTHOR'S OFFICE -- DAY

As before.

LUTHOR

Well hats off - but Superman is
still alive. You playing catch-up
was not part of the bargain.

Ty-Zor's eyes flash dangerously - Alexis looks afraid.
Luthor stands his ground, unruffled.

TY-ZOR

I will uphold my end of the bargain,
Lex Luthor. Superman will die -
when I decide he will die. Not
before. Am I understood?

LUTHOR

Perfectly.

TY-ZOR

Good.

With a curt nod he turns and stalks out. Luthor and Alexis watch as he takes flight off the balcony.

ALEXIS

Are you sure getting him angry was
a good idea?

LUTHOR

I've always found that the best
way to understand someone was to
fight him, make him angry - that's
when you see the real person.

ALEXIS

Yeah, well I've seen the real person
and right now I'm scared.

Luthor turns to face her with a kindly smile.

LUTHOR

You don't need to worry about anything. Right now Ty-Zor needs us more than we need him.

ALEXIS

For now.

She turns to walk out, stops and turns back.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)

But what do we do when Ty-Zor decides he doesn't need us anymore. You saw what he did to Superman--

LUTHOR

I'm not Superman, Alexis. And as for Ty-Zor...

(pause)

It's covered. If Ty-Zor tries to double cross us, he'll never know what hit him.

There's a hint of something very malevolent in his eye.

EXT. THE DAILY PLANET -- DAY

An establishing shot.

PERRY (prelap)

This has top priority!

INT. DAILY PLANET - CITY ROOM -- DAY

It's business as usual - noisy and chaotic, the stillness of the scene before broken. Perry is on his feet and pacing, making wild gestures with an unlit cigar.

PERRY

Whatever else you were working on, forget it. I want to know everything about what happened last night...

Clark slips in at the back, sidling in beside Lois. She looks at Clark in relief.

LOIS

(undertone)

Are you alright?

CLARK

(undertone)

Not here.

(beat)

No. No, not really...

PERRY

Why the hell am I still talking? Get on with it, everyone!

The meeting breaks up as everyone gets to work. Jimmy sits down at his desk.

JIMMY

Jesus...

CLARK

What is it?

JIMMY

Look at these.

His screen shows a series of photos taken during the fight. It doesn't look good for Superman.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

These were all over the networks within seconds ... Superman's getting his ass kicked.

Clark's face goes stony.

CLARK

Yeah ... yeah, he was.

Jimmy looks up, curious - Clark ignores it and walks off. He sits down at his desk. Lois leans across to him.

LOIS

Ignore them - this'll all be forgotten within a couple of days.

CLARK

You think?

He fixes her with a look - Lois wilts slightly.

LOIS

Well ... okay no, not really.

PERRY (O.S.)

What is this, somebody died?

They both look up as Perry storms down to them.

PERRY (CONT'D)

Whatever it is can wait. Superman got his ass kicked right and royally last night and I want it on my front page in time for the evening edition--

CLARK

Excuse me.

He gets quickly to his feet and exits the city room at a brisk clip.

PERRY

Kent?

But he's already gone. Perry looks to Lois.

PERRY (CONT'D)

What's going on?

Lois fixes him with a hard look.

LOIS

You know what, Perry - sometimes
you can be such a jerk.

She gets up and runs out after Clark.

Perry rounds on Jimmy - his expression clearly saying
'What's going on?'

Jimmy shrugs; 'no idea'.

EXT. DAILY PLANET ROOFTOP -- DAY

Clark is stood on the roof, looking out across the city.

LOIS (O.S.)

Thought I'd find you here.

She walks up beside him - down on the plaza below the
blackened 'S' shield is still visible.

LOIS (CONT'D)

Hey - this wasn't your fault.

CLARK

Wasn't it?

A long, tense beat.

LOIS

This Ty-Zor ... are you sure he's
one of yours?

CLARK

No. I'm not sure ... but I think
there's a very good chance of it.

For a moment they both just stand in silence.

CLARK (CONT'D)

What if he is? What if, just by
my presence, I'm putting this whole
world in danger?

(beat)

Maybe I should just leave - that
man, whoever he was, was here to
find me - maybe if I wasn't here
then--

LOIS

DON'T YOU DARE!

Clark's head shoot up - Lois looks livid.

LOIS (CONT'D)

Don't you DARE start feeling all self-pitying on me, Kent - you couldn't stop what happened last night, but if you hadn't been here then imagine what would have happened.

(beat)

We need you now more than ever.

Clark looks Lois in the eye - finds he believes her.

CLARK

Just promise me one thing.

LOIS

What?

CLARK

Promise me you'll never look at me the way they did last night.

(beat)

Afraid.

LOIS

(conviction)

Never.

She takes his arm.

INT. CADMUS LABS HANGER -- DAY

An establishing shot of Ty-Zor's ship.

HER-AL (prelap)

My Lord?

INT. KRYPTONIAN SHIP - CORRIDOR -- DAY

Ty-Zor and Her-al walk down the corridor.

HER-AL

Last night - you fought him?

TY-ZOR

I did.

(beat)

I was curious about him. About who he was. Now I've seen him.

HER-AL

And?

TY-ZOR

And I'm not impressed.

He turns to face his second in command.

TY-ZOR (CONT'D)

We will proceed with the plan on schedule. Activate the com system - I would speak with my father.

HER-AL

Yes My Lord.

INT. CADMUS LABS HANGER -- DAY

Just to establish.

INT. KRYPTONIAN SHIP - CABIN -- DAY

A badly out of focus hologram flickers to life - and we recognise it immediately as Kata-Zor. Ty-Zor bows.

TY-ZOR

Father.

KATA-ZOR

I received your report. You are certain this is the correct world?

TY-ZOR

Certain.

KATA-ZOR

And Kal-El?

Ty-Zor permits himself a small smile.

TY-ZOR

He will be dead long before you arrive.

(beat)

This world is ... incredible, father. The power of the yellow sun--

KATA-ZOR

--grants incredible power, yes, I know. Use it wisely, my son - I want Kal-El's head as a trophy when the fleet arrives.

TY-ZOR

You will have it, father.

KATA-ZOR

Until we speak again, my son.

The hologram fizzles out.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREETS -- DAY

A huge rally is in progress - thousands have flocked to the streets.

In the midst of it all we see Luthor and Pete, shaking hands, meeting and greeting, rallying support.

CAT (V.O.)

The Luthor campaign hits New York
as thousands take to the streets
to meet the presidential hopefuls.

On the street we find Cat and her camera crew.

CAT (CONT'D)

Once thought of as an outside
chance, Mr Luthor and Senator Ross
now have a five point lead in the
polls and it only continues to
rise.

EXT. LIBERTY ISLAND -- DAY

Just to establish.

CAT (V.O.)

After meeting and greeting
supporters on the street, the rally
reached Liberty Island, where a
press conference was given.

EXT. BASE OF THE STATUE OF LIBERTY -- DAY

Luthor, Pete, Harlin and the entourage stand facing the
world's media.

JOURNALIST #1

Mr Luthor, Senator Ross - election
day's just around the corner, are
you feeling confident?

PETE

Can I answer you that in a few
days time?

Laughter from the crowd.

LUTHOR

Over confidence never serves anyone
well - but I'll tell you this much.
We aren't running in this race to
come second.

Cheers from the faithful in the crowd.

LUTHOR (CONT'D)

Come Friday night, I hope to see
all of you at our campaign HQ in
Metropolis for the celebrations!

HUGE cheers all around.

EXT. LIBERTY ISLAND -- DAY

Luthor, Pete and their entourage head over to where two
LexCorp helicopters are waiting. Luthor shakes Pete's
hand, SHOUTING to make himself heard over the noise of the
rotor blades.

LUTHOR
Good luck in Ohio!

PETE
Thanks - you too!

As Pete runs off to get into the first helicopter, Luthor and Harlin get in the second one. Both choppers take off, flying off in separate directions.

INT. LUTHOR'S CHOPPER -- DAY

Luthor and Harlin sat in the back.

LUTHOR
Any progress with Senator Kinsey?

HARLIN
If he knows what's good for him -
he really doesn't need to have
that tape of him and the call girl
reach the press.

LUTHOR
(smiles)
Definitely not.

An aide hands him a file which he passes to Harlin.

LUTHOR (CONT'D)
Make sure this reaches the New
York Times tonight - I want it in
tomorrow's edition.

HARLIN
Yes Mr Luthor.

EXT. METROPOLIS -- DAY

Ty-Zor and Her-al fly across the city, eventually coming in to land on on the roof of the LexCorp tower.

INT. LEXCORP TOWER - CONFERENCE ROOM -- DAY

Alexis is sat by herself, talking on her cell-phone.

ALEXIS
Yes, it's all going fine ... exactly
as planned.
(beat)
Well he won't care will he, once
he's elected he's going to have
bigger things to worry about than
this...

She glances up through the window and goes silent - she's spotted Ty-Zor and Her-al making their way down the corridor.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)
(into phone)
I'll call you back.

She hangs up.

INT. LEXCORP TOWER - CORRIDORS -- DAY

Ty-Zor and Her-al march past the windows of the conference room - they don't see Alexis through the window.

HER-AL

Is this a wise move, My Lord?

TY-ZOR

We'll need Luthor's help if we plan to take out Kal-El with the correct timing...

They reach a door at the end of the corridor ... but the moment they get within three feet of it they both REACT, pulling back in pain.

HER-AL

What is this?

Ty-Zor holds his hand out as and approaches the door - again, the second he gets within three feet he reacts in pain.

The veins on the back of his hand begin to writhe, turning green. Ty-Zor's face contorts in anger.

TY-ZOR

The green death!

From the conference room Alexis is watching.

INT. LEXCORP TOWER - CONFERENCE ROOM -- DAY

Alexis watches in horror as Ty-Zor rounds on Her-al angrily.

TY-ZOR

Treachery!

INT. LEXCORP TOWER - CORRIDORS -- DAY

Ty-Zor is beside himself.

TY-ZOR

Luthor would make a bargain with us and plot to destroy us behind our backs!

HER-AL

What do we do, My Lord?

Ty-Zor considers.

TY-ZOR

For the moment we do nothing. Right now we need Luthor's help...

INT. LEXCORP TOWER - CONFERENCE ROOM -- DAY

Alexis' jaw drops in horror.

TY-ZOR
 ...but we will continue this charade
 only for as long as is necessary.

INT. LEXCORP TOWER - CORRIDORS -- DAY

Ty-Zor is fuming.

TY-ZOR
 And then--

HER-AL
 My Lord!

They've seen Alexis.

INT. LEXCORP TOWER - CONFERENCE ROOM -- DAY

Alexis' face contorts in horror - she turns and tries to
 run for it--

The door CRASHES OPEN--

Alexis is grabbed by Her-al - she tries to fight him off
 but he's too strong.

She looks up as Ty-Zor approaches.

TY-ZOR
 What did you hear?

ALEXIS
 (defiant)
 Everything, you son of a bitch--

Ty-Zor SLAPS Alexis across the face, hard.

TY-ZOR
 Bring her.

CUT TO:

EXT. METROPOLIS FREEWAY -- DAY

Traffic flows along in the midday rush.

Among the lines of traffic we pick out Lois' car.

LOIS (prelap)
 ...and of course then the situation
 only goes from bad to worse...

INT. LOIS' CAR -- DAY

Clark and Lois are inside. Lois drives and talks nineteen
 to the dozen.

LOIS
 (mid-rant)
 ...of course there's no way in
 hell Lex is going to let this thing
 (MORE)

LOIS (CONT'D)
 off without one hell of a party,
 so come Thursday night we'll be...

Clark isn't listening - he's staring out of the window,
 lost in thought.

EXT. METROPOLIS FREEWAY -- DAY

We PAN AWAY from Lois' car, going further up the freeway
 to where a truck carrying metal girders is navigating the
 traffic flow.

A rack of girders RATTLES DANGEROUSLY on the back.

INT. LOIS' CAR -- DAY

As before.

LOIS
 (still ranting)
 --Don't know he can pull it off -
 God, Perry's going to be in so
 much trouble, he made a bet with
 the guys upstairs that--

EXT. METROPOLIS FREEWAY -- DAY

The girders continue to rattle--

INT. LOIS' CAR -- DAY

Clark stares out of the window, looking distracted.

LOIS
 (still ranting)
 --Independent, first time this has
 ever happened--

EXT. METROPOLIS FREEWAY -- DAY

The straps holding the rattling girders stretch, strain--
 SNAP--

The girders go flying off--

INT. LOIS' CAR -- DAY

Lois is still ranting--

LOIS
 --can't think how this happened--

EXT. METROPOLIS FREEWAY -- DAY

SMASH! The girders fall off the back onto the freeway -
 cars are caught up--

INT. LOIS' CAR -- DAY

And Clark suddenly perks up - he looks up, fully alert.

LOIS
Clark, what is it?

CLARK
Stop the car!

Lois looks - the freeway is grinding to a halt.

LOIS
What the--?

She slams her foot on the break--

EXT. METROPOLIS FREEWAY -- DAY

A huge TANKER WAGON CRASHES into the girders--

Two cars from behind are KNOCKED OVER THE EDGE--!

The tanker spins wildly--

GOING OVER THE EDGE--!

ANGLE - CLARK AND LOIS

as they get out of the car along with everyone else to take a look.

LOIS
My god...

The tanker is teetering over the edge, slowly pulling the truck over--

Lois turns to Clark.

LOIS (CONT'D)
Clark!

Clark looks up sharply.

CLARK
Lois--

LOIS
Just do it. This looks like a job for Superman.

There is a shared look between the two of them for a long moment ... and then Clark's face fills with new resolve. A big grin splits his face and he turns and runs off.

PAN WITH CLARK

as he runs back down the freeway - unnoticed as everyone watches the wreck in terror--

He rips his shit open.

ON THE TRUCK

as the weight finally pulls the truck over the edge--

The two truckers SCREAM as the truck goes over--

The crowd looks terrified - they can't look away - Lois' hand goes to her mouth--

The truck sails downwards, heading towards another freeway--

And then STOPS DEAD!

INT. TRUCK CAB -- DAY

The two truckers look at each other--

TRUCKER #1
What the hell--

EXT. METROPOLIS FREEWAY -- DAY

The crowd looks over the edge at the truck hanging in mid-air--

Then Lois sees it. She's nearly crying with the emotion.

SUPERMAN.

Holding on to the bottom of the truck and slowly bringing it back up again. It's nothing fancy, but it's both heroic and spectacular. A jaw-dropping moment if ever there was one.

Superman sets the truck down on the highway. He walks around and opens the door to reveal the two frazzled truckers with in.

SUPERMAN
Are you gentlemen alright?

TRUCKER #1
Yeah, I think so...

SUPERMAN
Good.

He turns around to face the crowd - they're all just staring at him. For a moment there is an awful silence...

And then someone starts applauding. And then everyone does. And suddenly everyone on the freeway is cheering.

It's a fantastic moment of support, and it means the world to Superman.

He looks up to see Lois emerging out of the crowd. She's got a huge grin on her face, matching Superman's.

LOIS
Looks like someone's still popular.

Superman doesn't answer - his smile and look of triumph says it all.

LOIS (CONT'D)

Still a hero.

CUT TO:

INT. KRYPTONIAN SHIP - TORTURE ROOM -- NIGHT

On Ty-Zor's unmoving face as a hideous FEMALE SCREAM comes from off-screen. White electricity crackles.

TY-ZOR

Enough.

The electricity dies off. Ty-Zor steps forward.

TY-ZOR (CONT'D)

Are you ready to talk?

Alexis is chained in the centre of the room, her hands chained high over her head. Her whole form is racked with pain, but she gives Ty-Zor a look of undisguised defiance.

TY-ZOR (CONT'D)

Thought not.

He walks slowly around Alexis, admiring his handiwork. She's bleeding from wounds all over her body.

TY-ZOR (CONT'D)

Your father's being both very naive and very stupid if he thinks he can double-cross me.

(beat)

You don't have to be like him. His days were numbered the moment he attempted treachery. Tell me what he's planning. Tell me what he's planning and I'll spare you any further pain.

ALEXIS

Never!

Ty-Zor gives her a blank look.

TY-ZOR

Again.

The electricity crackles - Alexis' screams rip through the chamber.

EXT. LEXCORP TOWER -- NIGHT

Just to establish. The Luthor for President banners are even more prominent than before.

EXT. BALCONY -- NIGHT

Luthor stands on the balcony outside his office, looking down over the city. We can't read his expression.

After a moment we hear footsteps and Harlin approaches.

HARLIN

Mr Luthor?

Luthor turns to face Harlin, who is carrying Luthor's coat.

HARLIN (CONT'D)

They're waiting for us, sir.

LUTHOR

Thank you, Harlin.

He takes his coat and they head inside his office.

INT. LUTHOR'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

Luthor and Harlin make their way through the darkened office, Luthor pulling his coat on as they go.

LUTHOR

Have you seen Alexis, Harlin?

HARLIN

Not since this morning, sir.

Luthor shrugs as he fastens his coat.

LUTHOR

I'm sure she'll turn up.

INT. KRYPTONIAN SHIP - TORTURE ROOM -- NIGHT

Alexis is SCREAMING as the electricity crackles again - the sight is borderline horrifying.

Ty-Zor continues to watch with a blank expression.

As the electricity dies, he steps forward. Alexis sags against the chains holding her, gasping for breath. Ty-Zor takes hold of her chin, raises her face.

TY-ZOR

Very well. If you still refuse to co-operate, you will send a message to your father in another way.

He steps back and draws his sword. Alexis suddenly looks horrified.

ALEXIS

No, please - NO!!!

And Ty-Zor SLASHES his sword down as we--

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE TO:

EXT. METROPOLIS SKYLINE -- MORNING

As the sun rises above the city.

INT. CLARK'S APARTMENT -- MORNING

Clark is making breakfast. In the background the TV is going - Cat Grant on the election circuit.

CAT (O.S.)

...as the nation prepares to go to the polls this morning, and it couldn't possibly be any closer as Lex Luthor and his opponent are neck and neck...

LOIS (O.S.)

So it's still unclear?

Clark looks up as Lois emerges from the bedroom, buttoning up her blouse. Clark shrugs.

CLARK

Exit poll results haven't come through yet.

LOIS

This is closer than I would have liked it.

CLARK

(grins)
Me too.

Lois smiles as she crosses the floor to plant a kiss on Clark's lips.

LOIS

That was for yesterday. The people have their hero back.

CLARK

Yeah ... but for how long?

EXT. POLLING STATION -- DAY

A huge crowd has gathered outside, including a mob of journalists and TV people. Mercy stands guard at the door. A LexCorp helicopter is conspicuously parked nearby.

Cat makes an address to her cameraman.

CAT

Yes Ted, we're here at the Siegal Elementary School where Mr Luthor arrived less than an hour ago to cast his vote, and--

She gets a message in her earpiece.

CAT (CONT'D)

Hold on, I think he's coming out - yes, that's Mr Luthor coming out now.

The press surges around Luthor as he emerges with Harlin and an entourage of bodyguards.

CAT (CONT'D)

Mr Luthor, did you vote for yourself?

Luthor allows a small smile.

LUTHOR

Sorry Cat, can't tell you - that's between me and my conscience.

Some laughter.

CAT

Are you feeling confident?

LUTHOR

Let's see what the rest of the day holds, shall we?

There is some laughter as Luthor's entourage makes its way to the waiting chopper. Cat turns back to the camera.

CAT

Yes, Mr Luthor giving nothing away. Mr Luthor's running mate Senator Ross is today casting his vote in his home state of Kansas...

EXT. SMALLVILLE HIGH SCHOOL -- DAY

Just to establish.

INT. SMALLVILLE HIGH SCHOOL -- DAY

Pete emerges from his voting booth, drops his ballot into the box.

OFFICIAL

Good luck Pete.

PETE

Thanks Bryan.

As he makes his way out he catches sight of Jonathan and Martha entering.

PETE (CONT'D)

Mr and Mrs Kent.

MARTHA

(smiles)

Hello Pete.

She hugs him. Jonathan doesn't move a muscle.

PETE

I hope I can count on your support?

MARTHA

Well--

JONATHAN

(steely)

Pete, we have to vote for what we think is best for the country.

He gives Pete a steely look.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

I think you have your answer there.
Now if you'll excuse us...

He takes Martha's hand and they walk off. Pete watches them go with a confused look on his face.

EXT. THE DAILY PLANET -- DAY

Just to establish.

INT. DAILY PLANET - CITY ROOM -- DAY

The usual absolute bedlam, but about four times worse. We quickly PAN THROUGH the office - RAPID, FLASHY SHOTS showing Clark, Lois, Jimmy and others typing, on phones, arguing, hard at work.

Through the glass door we can see Perry on the phone. After a moment he hangs up and walks out into the city room.

PERRY

(yelling to be heard)

Alright people, listen up!

Everyone stops to listen.

PERRY (CONT'D)

The exit polls have just called in favour of Luthor and Ross--

On the reaction to this:

PERRY (CONT'D)

But only just.

(beat to let it
sink in)

This is still a two horse race, and by god I'm not going to declare either way until we have cast iron proof. Now you've all done this before, and we all know we're in this for the long haul. We aren't going home until tomorrow's issue is put to bed and we know for definite. So everyone ... do your jobs. We're in for a long night.

INT. DAILY PLANET - PERRY'S OFFICE -- DAY

Perry, Clark, Lois and Jimmy.

PERRY

This is going to be a close one
and we won't know until the last
minute.

JIMMY

Will that stop us going to print.

PERRY

(firm)

No!

Jimmy recoils back slightly from the snap. Perry deflates,
gives Jimmy an apologetic look.

PERRY (CONT'D)

(quieter)

No.

He turns to face them.

PERRY (CONT'D)

Whatever the outcome of this
election, we are in this for the
long haul and by god the Daily
Planet is going to be the one that
reports it. So people, what do we
reckon.

He turns around, lifts up an imitation front page of the
Daily Planet.

PERRY (CONT'D)

Is America going to be waking up
with this in the morning?

The headline reads 'Luthor Loses'.

Perry looks as though he's bracing himself before picking
up another page.

PERRY (CONT'D)

Or this?

The headline reads 'Luthor Elected'.

From the looks fired around the group, no-one looks happy
about the latter.

INT. DAILY PLANET - CITY ROOM -- DAY

Lois crosses to the coffee machine - she finds Clark already
stood there.

CLARK

White, no sugar?

LOIS

I'm sweet enough.

Clark doesn't bite. Lois notices.

LOIS (CONT'D)

What's on your mind?

Clark looks up - we see the worry on his face.

CLARK

Ty-Zor.

Lois's face freezes.

LOIS

What about him?

CLARK

He's still out there. No-one's seen him in weeks, but he's still out there.

LOIS

If he hasn't made his move by now--

Clark gives her a look that cuts her off.

CLARK

Then he soon will.

That awful truth hangs in the air between them.

EXT. LEXCORP TOWER -- DAY

Just to establish.

INT. LUTHOR'S OFFICE -- DAY

Luthor sweeps in, Harlin and Mercy behind him.

HARLIN

Senator Ross is on a plane back from Smallville as we speak--

LUTHOR

He'll be here at the end?

HARLIN

Definitely, sir.

LUTHOR

Good. If you'll excuse me.

They both get the hint and file out. Luthor waits until the door has closes behind them before walking over to his TV monitors and hitting a button.

LUTHOR (CONT'D)

Get me Ty-Zor.

INT. CADMUS LABS HANGER -- DAY

On the Kryptonian ship. Just to establish.

INT. KRYPTONIAN SHIP - CABIN -- DAY

Ty-Zor stands in his cabin, facing an image of Luthor.

TY-ZOR
All preparations have been made.

LUTHOR
Good.

He gives Ty-Zor a hard look.

LUTHOR (CONT'D)
Don't forget our deal, Ty-Zor.
Before midnight tonight I will be
President of the United States.
Keep up your end, and your people
will have a new home.

TY-ZOR
I understand.

LUTHOR
Good. And as for Superman...
(long beat)
It ends tonight.

TY-ZOR
I concur.

LUTHOR
Good. Just make sure--

TY-ZOR
I will hold up my end of the
bargain, Lex Luthor - just make
sure you uphold yours.

LUTHOR
Ty-Zor--

But Ty-Zor cuts off the communication. He picks up his sword.

INT. KRYPTONIAN SHIP - MAIN CABIN -- DAY

Her-al and a dozen other KRYPTONIAN WARRIORS are arming up for battle - armour, greaves, capes and 'S' shields are applied.

They all look up as Ty-Zor enters - he looks nothing short of regal in full armour, cape and sword.

HER-AL
My Lord.

The warriors all bow. Ty-Zor surveys his troops with a look of undisguised pride.

TY-ZOR

My friends ... we have long searched for a world for our people. You have all walked the stars alongside me for many years. We have lost many friends. Many of us had lost hope.

(beat)

And then we found this place. And with it we found hope again.

He looks each of them in the eye.

TY-ZOR (CONT'D)

Our quest ends tonight. Once Kal-El is dead, my father's forces will arrive and claim this world as our new home.

(pride)

A new home. OUR new home.

He walks among the ranks.

TY-ZOR (CONT'D)

We've fought together for many years. We've shed blood together, all of us. Tonight will be our final battle.

He stands in the middle of the group, raises his fist in the air.

TY-ZOR (CONT'D)

Victory!

ALL

Victory!

As the Kryptonians disperse, Her-al pulls Ty-Zor to one side.

HER-AL

What about the girl?

TY-ZOR

I think we should send Lex Luthor a message.

Her-al nods and smiles in agreement.

CUT TO:

EXT. METROPOLIS SKYLINE

DAY TURNS TO NIGHT above the skyline of the city.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LEXCORP PLAZA ONE -- NIGHT

The Luthor campaign is in full swing.

A mass rally of faithful Luthor supporters is present, loud music plays and the atmosphere is all party.

Off to one side, Clark is conferring with Pete beside the stage.

CLARK
Nervous?

PETE
(grins)
Butterflies in the stomach doesn't
even come close.

Clark pats Pete on the arm.

CLARK
You'll be fine.

As he moves off--

PETE
Clark?

Clark turns back. His old friend has a pained look.

PETE (CONT'D)
Have I done the right thing?

Clark doesn't answer ... but the look on his face is all the answer that Pete needs.

A tense moment between the two old friends ... then Clark walks off.

Pete stands watching his retreating form for a moment until Harlin approaches.

HARLIN
Mr Ross, you're wanted on stage.

PETE
Thanks.

INT. CADMUS LABS HANGER -- NIGHT

The Kryptonian ship is still parked, looking menacing as hell.

GUARD #1 (prelap)
What do you think that thing is?

TWO LEXCORP GUARDS are sat off to one side, watching the ship, smoking cigarettes.

GUARD #2
(shrugs)
How the hell do I know? All I
know is we've got to keep it from
wandering off and--

The ship's engine ROARS TO LIFE! The guards can only watch, speechless, as the ship TAKES OFF VERTICALLY, CRASHING through the ceiling and leaving a gigantic hole.

The two guards look at each other in stunned silence.

GUARD #1

Shit.

CUT TO:

EXT. LEXCORP PLAZA ONE -- NIGHT

Lois and Jimmy are watching the party from the sidelines. Jimmy is craning his neck, scanning the faces.

JIMMY

She's not here.

Lois looks up in interest.

LOIS

Who?

Before Jimmy can answer Clark has appeared out of the crowd.

CLARK

There you are.

LOIS

Hey. How's Pete?

CLARK

Nervous.

LOIS

He'll be fine.

She notices Jimmy scanning the crowd again.

CLARK

Jim?

JIMMY

She's not here. Alexis.

LOIS

(sighs)

Jimmy, if I were you I'd put this crush of yours out of your mind before--

CLARK

No, he's right.

He quickly scans the crowd himself, confirms it a moment later.

CLARK (CONT'D)

She's not here.

Now even Lois looks concerned.

LOIS

That's odd--

She's cut off by DEAFENING APPLAUSE as Luthor and Pete take to the stage - the crowd is treating them like conquering heroes.

JIMMY

(snapping photos)

He hasn't even won the damn election yet.

LOIS

(darkly)

Give him time...

Luthor takes to the mic, regales the crowd with a huge grin.

LUTHOR

Thank you.

(beat)

Well, I've prepared two speeches - all things considered, I hope I get the chance to read you the one in my left pocket.

A laugh from the crowd.

EXT. METROPOLIS -- NIGHT

Ty-Zor's ship cruises slowly through the city.

It parks in MID-AIR over the city.

INT. KRYPTONIAN SHIP - BRIDGE -- NIGHT

Ty-Zor surveys the city with a grim expression.

TY-ZOR

And so it begins.

EXT. METROPOLIS -- NIGHT

TIGHT on the underside of the ship as a hatch opens and something DARK AND MENACING descends...

EXT. LEXCORP PLAZA ONE -- NIGHT

The party is in full swing.

Off to one side, Luthor is grilling Mercy and he looks bloody furious.

LUTHOR

What do you mean you don't know where she is?

ANGLE - CLARK

who is scanning the crowd, looking apprehensive. Lois notices.

LOIS
Clark, what is it?

CLARK
Something's wrong--

BOOM! A HUGE EXPLOSION off-screen - the black night turns red--

TY-ZOR (O.S.)
(screaming)
KAL-EL!

Everyone turns to look--

A GIGANTIC FLYING TANK is making it's way through the city. It takes a potshot at a nearby building - levels it to rubble in seconds.

LOIS
My god...

TY-ZOR (O.S.)
(screaming)
KAL-EL!

Everyone looks up to see Ty-Zor and a dozen Kryptonian warriors flying around the tank.

ON CLARK as his face goes tense, drawn.

ON LUTHOR as his expression mirror's Clark's ... for the first time Luthor seems to comprehend the power he's unleashed.

TY-ZOR (CONT'D)
(screaming)
COME OUT AND FIGHT, KAL-EL!

Lois looks horrified.

LOIS
Clark, don't--

She turns to look. Clark is nowhere to be seen.

EXT. METROPOLIS SKIES -- NIGHT

Superman FLASHES UP from the city, closing in on Ty-Zor and his cronies at high speed.

EXT. DOWNTOWN METROPOLIS -- NIGHT

On the streets PEOPLE RUN SCREAMING as the gigantic tank causes carnage--

BANG! A shell CRASHES into the side of a building - rubble is strewn across the street, FLATTENING PEDESTRIANS--

Superman appears out of the sky - flashing down to face the tank--

Just as he gets to eye-level, the gigantic gun turns to face him--

BOOM! The shell catches Superman full in the chest - sending him HURLING BACKWARDS--

CRASH! Into a brick wall - cracks appear in all directions - Superman is dazed--

ANGLE - TY-ZOR AND HER-AL

watch from a nearby building. Unemotional. Clinical.

ON SUPERMAN

he pulls himself together - looks up to see the tank readying another shell--

SUPERMAN

(grim)

Oh no you don't--

He FLASHES FORWARD--

CATCHES THE SHELL IN MID-AIR--

Turns and HURLS IT UP AT Ty-ZOR AND Her-al--!

Her-al ducks, horrified - Ty-Zor never moves; his irises TURN RED--

EXPLODING the shell in mid-air!

Superman and Ty-Zor lock eyes for just a moment. Deadlock. Two adversaries sizing each other up.

SUPERMAN (CONT'D)

You'll keep.

TY-ZOR

I'll be waiting.

Superman turns and flies back towards the tank.

He flies alongside - is HAILED ON ALL SIDES by fire from SMALL LASER CANNONS--

Superman grits his teeth, withstanding it - he gets closer--

The turret PIVOTS, the gigantic cannon SMASHING into Superman, sending him hurtling to the ground--

He CRASHES, chewing the pavement, creating a forty-foot gouge in the ground--

And he's up on his feet immediately, FLYING BACK towards the tank.

ON TY-ZOR AND HER-AL

they watch as Superman gets back into the fight.

HER-AL

He has resolve, I'll give him that.

Ty-Zor has a look of something that might be approaching respect.

TY-ZOR

Indeed.

They watch as Superman flies straight up into the sky--

Superman turns, hovers in mid-air - looks down at the giant tank on the streets below--

His face goes stony. Resolute.

And he flashes down out of the sky. Like a bullet.

SMASH! Straight into the side of the tank and through it.

ON TY-ZOR AND HER-AL

as they watch - impressed.

ON THE TANK

as it suddenly begins to shudder in it's death throes--

Without warning it flies STRAIGHT UP INTO THE SKY - Ty-Zor and Her-al watch as it rises--

EXPLODES over the city in a SPECTACULAR FIREBALL.

Ty-Zor watches coldly as the fireball recedes - and at the heart of it we see Superman, unscathed, giving Ty-Zor a matching cold look.

SUPERMAN

Was that the best you could do?

TY-ZOR

Oh no. This hasn't even begun yet.

He raises his hand. All around him, a dozen Kryptonian warriors in full battle dress emerge from concealment, weapons drawn.

Ty-Zor regards Superman coldly. Draws his sword.

TY-ZOR (CONT'D)

This is your end, Kal-El.

ON SUPERMAN as we see the horror on his face - more than a dozen opponents, each with all his powers--

But then he goes resolute. He has a job to do.

SUPERMAN

Bring it on.

And he flashes down like a bullet - Ty-Zor rockets up to face him--

All the Kryptonians take flight--

COLLIDE IN MID-AIR--

And the battle begins.

INT. DAILY PLANET - CITY ROOM -- NIGHT

The doors bang open - Lois CHARGES IN to find the usual chaos. Perry looks up.

PERRY

Lois, why the hell aren't you at LexCorp? Florida just called in favour of Luthor--

LOIS

This is more important. We need to get to the roof. Now.

Something in her tone tells Perry she isn't kidding around.

EXT. DAILY PLANET ROOFTOP -- NIGHT

Lois, Perry and a huge group of Planet staff emerge onto the roof - Perry's eyes go wide.

PERRY

Great Shades of Elvis--

In the skies above the city the battle rages on.

EXT. DOWNTOWN METROPOLIS -- NIGHT

The battle continues.

This is not a battle like anything we have seen before. This is a full-scale war between super-powered opponents. They're all evenly matched.

And Superman is getting the shit beaten out of him.

No sooner does he fight off one opponent than another two take his place.

No sooner does he score a win then he is pulled back down into the fight by another villain.

They all have the same powers. Superman knows how to use them better. But he's vastly outnumbered.

They're going to beat it eventually. He knows it. Ty-Zor knows it.

It's just a matter of time.

EXT. LEXCORP TOWER -- NIGHT

Jimmy emerges from the front door of the building - the battle is raging in the skies above him. He brings his camera up, takes pictures like a man possessed.

JIMMY

Come on, come on--

Then he hears something OS - a human groan of pain. He turns, sees something--

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Oh no...

A female body lying on the ground by the front door. Busied and battered. But still alive.

He rushes to her side, drops down beside her. His eyes go wide.

It's Alexis. She's still alive, but only just.

ALEXIS

(weak)

Help ... me...

EXT. DOWNTOWN METROPOLIS -- NIGHT

Superman HITS THE DECK, taking THREE KRYPTONIANS with him--

Immediately he's BACK UP, flying back into the melee--

He takes a blow to his back; whirls - blasts his opponent with heat vision--

He fixates on Ty-Zor. Who is now not taking part.

He's watching from the sidelines. Observing. Cold.

EXT. LEXCORP PLAZA ONE -- NIGHT

The party atmosphere has vanished completely, replaced by borderline panic.

Luthor, Pete, Harlin and Mercy are all in the middle of it.

HARLIN

Mr Luthor, we need to get you inside--

LUTHOR

No!

He takes a step forward. Eyes fixed on the gigantic aerial brawl taking place in front of us. Awed. Transfixed.

LUTHOR (CONT'D)

I have to see this.

Pete and Harlin exchange glances--

And then a HORRIFIED SCREAM goes up from among the partygoers - everyone turns to look.

JIMMY (O.S.)

I'm gonna need some help here!

Everyone looks - Luthor's jaw drops--

Jimmy is emerging into the plaza. Holding Alexis' bloodied body in his arms.

LUTHOR

ALEXIS!

And we've never seen emotion like this from Lex Luthor before. He RUSHES down to his daughter's side as Jimmy gently lowers her to the ground.

Pete on his cell-phone in the background--

PETE

We're gonna need an ambulance right now! LexCorp plaza--

Luthor is frantic beside Alexis - her eyes flutter open.

ALEXIS

(weak)

Da ... daddy...

LUTHOR

(frantic)

It's alright, it's alright, help is on the way, it's alright...

She grabs his hand - looks deep into his eyes. This is taking all her efforts, but she has to tell him...

ALEXIS

(weak)

Ty-Zor...

And she slumps back. Unconscious. But still alive.

MEDICS rush onto the scene - they attend Alexis, checking her vitals, getting her on a stretcher.

Luthor gets to his feet.

And we've never seen him more furious than he is right now.

EXT. DOWNTOWN METROPOLIS -- NIGHT

SMASH! Superman hits the ground hard.

PULL BACK to reveal Superman lying at the base of a gigantic crater caved into the road.

He looks up to see one of the Kryptonians - TAZA - stood at the edge of the pit, watching him with a look of contempt.

TAZA

Just as Ty-Zor said - you are weak.
You are a coward. You have no
right to wear that symbol on your
chest.

Superman struggles to hit feet - he's hurt badly, we can
see that from his body language. But he ain't giving up.

TAZA (CONT'D)

Give in to the inevitable. Your
death will be a quick one.

SUPERMAN

Never.

He launches himself STRAIGHT AT TAZA - the fight goes back
to the skies.

ON TY-ZOR AND HER-AL

as they continue to watch the battle.

HER-AL

Why does he fight on?

Ty-Zor says nothing - he's watching the battle, transfixed/

HER-AL (CONT'D)

He must know his death is
inevitable, but he still fights.

ON SUPERMAN

as a huge piece of masonry falls from the side of a building--

He rolls and dives - SNAGS the huge chunk, seconds away
from flattening two PEDESTRIANS.

SUPERMAN

Get out of here, it isn't safe!

The pedestrians leg it.

ON TY-ZOR AND HER-AL

Ty-Zor gives Superman a look of something approaching
respect.

TY-ZOR

He's not fighting for himself.

HER-AL

What?

TY-ZOR

He's fighting for them.

Her-al looks down - sees the people on the streets staring
up at Superman. Willing him to continue.

Hope in their eyes.

TY-ZOR (CONT'D)

To these people he's a hero.

(beat)

And he's going to die defending them.

HER-AL

My lord--

He looks at Ty-Zor - sees the look of respect on Ty-Zor's face.

EXT. LEXCORP PLAZA ONE -- NIGHT

Alexis is loaded into the back of an ambulance. Luthor watches as she's driven off, his face cold and angry.

He takes a look up at the aerial battle taking place above him, then grabs his phone.

LUTHOR

(into phone)

Strike Team, this is Luthor.

(grim)

Green light.

EXT. DAILY PLANET ROOFTOP -- NIGHT

Perry, Lois and the rest of the Planet staff continue to watch the battle in horror.

LOIS

(anguished)

They're killing him!

A young REPORTER rushes onto the scene.

REPORTER

Mr White--

PERRY

Not now!

REPORTER

Sir - you really need to see this.

He thrusts a piece of paper into Perry's hand.

Perry takes a look and his face falls.

EXT. DOWNTOWN METROPOLIS -- NIGHT

Superman is now at the end of his tether - two, three, FOUR crunching blows smash into him...

He falls from the sky and crashes onto the pavement. He can't get up.

TY-ZOR

Time to end this.

He flies down - lands beside Superman. Superman tries to bring Ty-Zor into focus as he draws his sword.

SUPERMAN

Ty-Zor...

TY-ZOR

You've fought well, Kal-El ... you have earned a death at my hands.

(beat)

I'll make it quick. You've earned that much.

He brings his sword up--

BOOM! Something EXPLODES overhead--!

EXT. DAILY PLANET ROOFTOP -- NIGHT

Lois and Perry watch, uncomprehending.

LOIS

What the--?

EXT. DOWNTOWN METROPOLIS -- NIGHT

Superman and Ty-Zor look up - Ty-Zor's face contorts--

TY-ZOR

No...

LEXFLIGHT ATTACK CHOPPERS are descending into the plaza.

CHOPPER PILOT (O.S.)

Base Camp, this is LexFlight one.

INT. LUTHOR'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

Luthor is watching from his window.

CHOPPER PILOT (O.S.)

Do we have your approval to proceed?

A moment before Luthor answers ... then--

LUTHOR

You have my approval. Wipe them out.

EXT. DOWNTOWN METROPOLIS -- NIGHT

The choppers go into battle - the Kryptonians attack back--

BOOM! Missiles are launched - two, three Kryptonians drop like flies. The air is filled with a green glow.

TY-ZOR

The green death...

SUPERMAN

Kryptonite.

Ty-Zor's face contorts in fury.

TY-ZOR

NO!!!

And he launches himself upwards into the battle--

INT. LUTHOR'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

The battle continues - a green glow fills the air.

Luthor watches, grim-faced.

EXT. DOWNTOWN METROPOLIS -- NIGHT

It's a massacre.

The choppers go into battle--

Ty-Zor can only watch as his forces are pelted with Kryptonite missels .

All around him the Kryptonian warriors are dropping like flies.

EXT. DAILY PLANET ROOFTOP -- NIGHT

Lois and Perry watch as the sky turns green.

There are no words to describe what this looks like.

EXT. DOWNTOWN METROPOLIS -- NIGHT

Her-al downs a LexFlight chopper - two more pelt him with missiles--

TY-ZOR

NO!!

He can only watch as his lieutenant falls from the sky.

Superman struggles to his feet. He looks up--

TELESCOPIC - he sees the Daily Planet building. Sees Lois stood on the roof.

And he takes off, heading for the roof of the Planet.

EXT. DAILY PLANET ROOFTOP -- NIGHT

Everyone STEPS BACK as Superman comes into land, rather awkwardly.

PERRY

(yelling to crowd)

Everyone back! Give him some room!

Everyone shuffles back slightly as Lois drops down beside Superman. He looks up, focuses on her face.

SUPERMAN

Hi.

He's still alive, and everything we ever needed to know about Lois is written all over her face.

LOIS
(trying not to cry)
Hi.

INT. LUTHOR'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

Luthor watches coldly as the choppers mop up the remaining Kryptonians.

A tap at the door - Luthor doesn't look up as Harlin enters.

HARLIN
Mr Luthor.

Luthor doesn't reply.

HARLIN (CONT'D)
Sir?

Luthor jars out of his thoughts, turning back to face Harlin.

LUTHOR
Yes, sorry Mr Harlin. What is it?

Harlin's usually impassive face breaks into a huge smile.

EXT. DAILY PLANET ROOFTOP -- NIGHT

Superman struggles up into a sitting position.

LOIS
Easy, take it easy--

SUPERMAN
I'll be alright ... I just need a moment...
(grins)
This is officially the worst night of my life.

LOIS
(surprised)
You heard?

SUPERMAN
Heard what?

LOIS
You haven't heard?

SUPERMAN
Lois!

LOIS
The final results are in.

A long beat - and Superman gets it.

SUPERMAN

You mean...?

LOIS

I mean he won.

INT. LUTHOR'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

Luthor is sat behind his desk, his expression completely unreadable.

LOIS (V.O.)

Lex Luthor is President of the
United States.

EXT. DAILY PLANET ROOFTOP -- NIGHT

On Superman and Lois as they take this in.

SUPERMAN

Oh boy...

And at that moment a sound rips through the night air -
they all look up--

To see Ty-Zor's ship making it's way across the city.

INT. KRYPTONIAN SHIP - BRIDGE -- NIGHT

Ty-Zor pilots solo, his expression unreadable.

EXT. DAILY PLANET ROOFTOP -- NIGHT

Superman struggles back to his feet.

LOIS

No!

SUPERMAN

No, I'm alright.

He gives her an honest look.

SUPERMAN (CONT'D)

I've got to do this. I've got to
see this through to the end.

Lois nods once, understanding.

LOIS

Go and get him.

Superman smiles as he takes flight.

EXT. METROPOLIS -- NIGHT

Ty-Zor's ship continues to make it's way across the city.

INT. KRYPTONIAN SHIP - BRIDGE -- NIGHT

Ty-Zor pilots the ship. His movements are slow and sluggish, like someone having to concentrate to perform even basic tasks.

BOOM! He looks up as the door bursts open and Superman strides in--

TY-ZOR

Stay back!

Superman stops dead - horror on his face.

SUPERMAN

My God...

A huge chunk of active Kryptonite is embedded in Ty-Zor's side!

Ty-Zor manages a weak smile.

TY-ZOR

My time has come, obviously. Now only one thing remains.

He hits a switch.

SUPERMAN

What have you done?

TY-ZOR

Activated the self destruct. I don't want the technology of this ship falling into Luthor's hands.

SUPERMAN

Lex Luthor? He's the one who brought you here?

TY-ZOR

He betrayed me.
(off look)
I see you are not surprised.

SUPERMAN

Not really, no.

Ty-Zor turns in his chair, stands to face Superman. The Kryptonite poisoning is turning his face green - he hasn't got long left.

TY-ZOR

You fought with honour. In another life - had things been different - I might have called you friend, son of Jor-El.

SUPERMAN

This doesn't have to be the end. I can get you to a hospital--

Ty-Zor waves this away with one hand.

TY-ZOR

Better to be a warrior and die on
my feet.

He gives Superman a look of respect.

TY-ZOR (CONT'D)

You fought well on behalf of this
world, Kal-El. But this is just
the beginning.

It takes Superman a moment to register this--

SUPERMAN

What are you saying--?

BEEP! Something on the control panel turns red--

TY-ZOR

Go! Now!

And Superman doesn't have a choice - he shoots STRAIGHT UP--

EXT. METROPOLIS -- NIGHT

Superman rockets straight up into the heavens as Ty-Zor's
ship EXPLODES--!

A huge fireball appears above the city ... which then
IMPLODES to nothing.

Superman hovers above the city in silence. Everything is
silent.

He looks down - catches sight of the Daily Planet. Lois
is still standing on the roof.

She raises a hand to him.

He raises his back.

Then he turns and rockets across the city.

EXT. LEXCORP PLAZA ONE -- NIGHT

And the party is in full swing again. Coloured streamers
flow through the air. Champagne flows like water.

Cat addresses her camera.

CAT

Just moments ago, in the aftermath
of Superman's defeat of the invading
forces, New York called in favour
of Luthor and Ross. Yes Ted, it's
now Official - Lex Luthor is the
new President of the United States,
and here in Metropolis the party
is set to continue long into the
night...

Luthor emerges onto the balcony to THUNDEROUS APPLAUSE.
Pete appears beside him, hands him a champagne glass.

PETE

We did it, Lex.

They clink glasses. A small smile breaks Luthor's grim expression.

LUTHOR

Yes we did.

BYSTANDER

Look!

Everyone looks - Superman is descending from the heavens into the middle of the plaza.

Everyone JUMPS BACK to give him room to land. His eyes meet Luthor's - cold fire blazing in his blue eyes. He walks up the steps to the podium.

It's deathly silence. You could hear a pin drop. The atmosphere is tense as hell for a few second. Then:

LUTHOR

Superman.

SUPERMAN

I just wanted to say...

He looks as though he's about to rip Luthor in half - but he doesn't. He holds his hand out.

SUPERMAN (CONT'D)

Congratulations, Mr President.

Luthor takes the hand and shakes it. And the crowd goes wild.

From the look that passes between Superman and Luthor we know that neither one of them is happy about this.

And we PAN AWAY from them, across the party as we:

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL WARD -- DAY

Alexis is lying asleep in bed, hooked up to endless medical gear. Luthor is sat nearby, holding her hand.

Suddenly her hand squeezes his - he looks up in time to see her eyes open.

ALEXIS

Hey.

LUTHOR
 (smiles)
 Hey.

ALEXIS
 I hear congratulations are in order.

LUTHOR
 Something like that.

He leans in close to her.

LUTHOR (CONT'D)
 I don't want you worrying about
 any of this. You just concentrate
 on getting better, OK? The doctors
 say you're going to be just fine.

Alexis doesn't answer for a long moment.

ALEXIS
 Ty-Zor?

LUTHOR
 Dead.

Alexis gives her father a hard look.

ALEXIS
 Do you think this is the end of
 it?

Luthor doesn't answer - but the look on his face says
 everything.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR -- DAY

Jimmy is sat on a bench outside.

He looks up as the door opens and Luthor emerges. Jimmy
 jumps to his feet.

JIMMY
 Mr President.

LUTHOR
 Mr Olsen.

JIMMY
 Is she alright?

LUTHOR
 She will be.

He gives Jimmy an honest, man-to-man look.

LUTHOR (CONT'D)
 You saved my daughter's life, Mr
 Olsen. I won't forget that. Not
 ever.

He holds out his hand.

LUTHOR (CONT'D)

I'm in your debt, Sir.

Jimmy is thunderstruck - he shakes Luthor's hand.

LUTHOR (CONT'D)

If you ever need anything, come to me.

And he turns and walks off down the corridor. Jimmy can't believe what just happened.

He turns and looks in through the window. Alexis sees him looking. She smiles and waves. He waves back.

EXT. LEXCORP TOWER -- DAY

Just to establish.

INT. LUTHOR'S OFFICE -- DAY

Luthor enters, pours himself a stiff drink. After a moment he smiles.

LUTHOR

I'd invite you in for a drink, but something tells me you'd say no.

He turns and looks. Superman is hovering outside the window. Luthor makes a hand gesture and the window opens. Superman walks in.

SUPERMAN

I'll pass.

LUTHOR

I thought as much.

There's an odd moment. The two men seem to be sizing each other up.

LUTHOR (CONT'D)

I seem to have made a grave mistake, and it nearly cost me dearly. I didn't know how dearly until...

He breaks off, looks away.

LUTHOR (CONT'D)

I'll admit I was wrong. That's not something you'll hear from me very often. I made a mistake and my daughter nearly paid for it with her life. I won't let that happen again.

He looks Superman in the eye.

LUTHOR (CONT'D)

As much as you and I may not like each other, Superman ... we are
(MORE)

LUTHOR (CONT'D)
 each in each other's debt. There
 is a truce between us now.

He holds out a hand.

LUTHOR (CONT'D)
 To a fresh start?

But Superman pointedly doesn't shake it.

SUPERMAN
 No thank you.

He gives Luthor a hard look.

SUPERMAN (CONT'D)
 Because this whole mess was your
 fault. You brought Ty-Zor here.
 You thought you could control him,
 and you were wrong. You daughter
 nearly died, yes, but countless
 others lost their lives when Ty-
 Zor went into battle against me.
 I tried to save as many as I could -
 but their blood is on your hands.
 Yours. Not mine.

He takes a step back.

SUPERMAN (CONT'D)
 Ty-Zor might be dead, but you know
 this isn't the end of it, don't
 you?

LUTHOR
 (nods sadly)
 I know. There will be more to
 come.

SUPERMAN
 And I'll be here when it does.
 (gives him a look)
 And so will you. Think about that,
 Mr President.

And Superman turns and flies off, leaving Luthor behind,
 pondering his thoughts. Because he knows Superman's right.

INT. DAILY PLANET - CITY ROOM -- DAY

CLOSE on a headline - "Superman triumphs as Luthor wins
 Presidency!"

PERRY (prelap)
 Alright people, let's move!

GENERAL P.O.V.

The usual commotion of the Daily Planet. Perry stands
 addressing the troops.

PERRY (CONT'D)

We've got a brand new President,
so you've got no excuse for sitting
around - find me some stories!
Jump to it!

And we're back to the usual commotion. Lois races across
the city room, buttonholes Clark.

LOIS

Hey.

CLARK

Hey.

Lois reaches up and kisses him on the cheek. Clark looks
around, slightly shifty.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Think that's a good idea?

LOIS

(shrugs)

I don't care who knows. Not any
more.

(lowers her voice)

How was Lex?

CLARK

(lowers voice to
match)

About what you expect. He knows
he created this mess, and now he
knows he's going to have to deal
with it.

An awkward moment.

LOIS

Still - we've got some time yet,
right?

CLARK

(grins)

Right.

LOIS

Dinner tonight? My place.

CLARK

What, you're going to cook?

LOIS

Don't push your luck, farm boy.

They both laugh.

CLARK

Dinner sounds great.

LOIS

My place at about eight?

CLARK

Sure...

He trails off, looking at something off-screen. Lois takes a look - on the TV screen a news report is running. "Forest Fire in Central America."

CLARK (CONT'D)

Nine?

Lois smiles and shrugs.

LOIS

Nine works for me.

Clark turns and heads for the elevator. The lift closes behind him.

EXT. METROPOLIS -- DAY

Superman rises up from the Daily Planet, vanishes into the sky...

And we pan upwards into the white clouds and the darkness of space beyond as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SPACE

Blackness. Nothing for a moment.

Then a small spaceship moves into frame. Then another. And another.

And we PULL BACK to reveal the GIGANTIC ARMADA we saw leaving Krypton earlier.

INT. KATA-ZOR'S SHIP - BRIG

Kata-Zor strides in. In the background we can just make out the shape of a man, sat in one of the cells.

KATA-ZOR

My son is dead.

He sits down on a bench.

KATA-ZOR (CONT'D)

We got the self-destruct signal from his ship. Ty-Zor has died ... killed by Kal-El.

He turns to face the man in the cell.

KATA-ZOR (CONT'D)

There will have to be war for this. You know that, don't you?

(long beat)

Earth will fall, and become the new sanctuary for our people...

The man in the cell moves - his face comes into the light--

KATA-ZOR (CONT'D)

And it will all be your doing, Jor-
El.

JOR-EL gives Kata-Zor a look of absolute defiance as we...

FADE OUT.

CREDITS.

THE END.